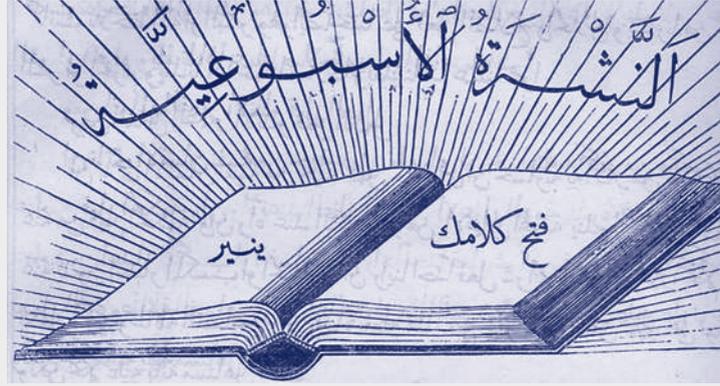


Uta Zeuge-Buberl

# The Mission of the American Board in Syria

Implications of a transcultural  
dialogue



History

Franz Steiner Verlag

Uta Zeuge-Buberl  
The Mission of the American Board in Syria



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# **The Mission of the American Board in Syria**

Implications of a transcultural dialogue

Translated by Elizabeth Janik



Franz Steiner Verlag

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*To Andreas, Jarik and Ylvi*



## CONTENTS

Illustrations .....	8	
Abbreviations .....	9	
Preface .....	11	
Introduction		
1. “The rest of the world need[s] civilizing”: Between cultural arrogance and love for the foreign .....	13	
2. Conditions for transcultural dialogue .....	17	
3. Past and current research .....	19	
4. Goals of this study .....	25	
5. Overview .....	26	
6. Notes on sources and methodology .....	27	
7. Notes on the transliteration of proper names and geographic designations .....	29	
Chapter I: The mission of the ABCFM in the Ottoman province of Syria (1819–1870) .....		31
I.1. The American Syria Mission: A success story? .....	38	
1. The American Mission Press in Beirut .....	38	
2. The mission schools .....	43	
3. “Satisfactory evidence of piety”: Establishing Syrian Protestant congregations .....	49	
4. Advanced schooling “in the native style”: The seminary in ‘Abeih .....	56	
5. “We are making history out here very fast”: The Syrian Protestant College .....	61	
6. “This field it seems to me to be unwise in us to forsake”: Hopes, disappointments, and differences of opinion in the Syria Mission .....	68	
I.2. Processes of cultural transformation in nineteenth-century Syria .....	71	
1. Important political developments .....	71	
2. The emergence of an educated middle class in Beirut .....	74	
3. Schooling in the Ottoman Empire .....	76	
4. Literary and scientific societies .....	79	
5. Syria’s <i>nahḍa</i> : A bridge between past and future .....	86	
6. What role did American missionaries play in Syria’s <i>nahḍa</i> ? .....	90	

Chapter II: Missionaries as cultural brokers .....	92
II. 1. “Here may my last days be spent”: Eli Smith (1801–1857) .....	97
1. Biographical overview .....	97
2. “The outstanding figure of the early Syrian mission” .....	99
3. American Arabic Type .....	102
4. <i>Al-Kitab al-Muqaddas</i> : The Arabic Bible .....	105
5. The first Arabic journal in Syria: <i>Majmu‘ Fawa‘id</i> .....	110
6. <i>Biblical Researches in Palestine</i> .....	114
7. Additional publications .....	117
8. Smith’s involvement with the Oriental societies .....	119
9. Correspondence with Syrian friends and colleagues .....	122
10. Final observations .....	125
II.2. “[He] had Arabic at his tongue’s and fingers’ ends”:	
Cornelius Van Dyck (1818–1895) .....	127
1. Biographical overview .....	127
2. “Our policy has been a contracting not an extending policy”:	
Van Dyck and the Syria Mission .....	128
3. Completion of the Arabic Bible .....	138
4. Al-Ḥakīm .....	142
5. From <i>Akhbar ‘an Intishar al-Injil fi Amakin Mukhtalifa</i> to	
<i>al-Nashra al-Usubu‘iyya</i> .....	152
6. “The joys of science”: Van Dyck and the scientific societies .....	157
7. Final observations .....	158
Chapter III: The community of Syrian Protestants in the contact zone .....	163
III.1. “A man ahead of his time”?	
Mu‘allim Butrus al-Bustani (1819–1883) .....	169
1. Biographical overview .....	
2. “May [he] live as burning and shining light ... in this	
dark land”: Bustani’s work for the mission .....	170
3. <i>Al-Madrasa al-Wataniyya</i> : A model of secularism	
and national pride .....	179
4. <i>Ḥubb al-waṭan</i> (Love for the nation): Bustani’s career	
as an author, journalist, and publisher .....	185
5. In support of women’s education and cultural progress:	
Bustani and the literary circles .....	192
6. Final observations .....	195
III.2. “He was truly the child of the mission”:	
Rev. John Wortabet, M. D. (1827–1908) .....	199
1. Biographical overview .....	199
2. A child of the mission? .....	200
3. Distancing from the ABCFM .....	209
4. Wortabet’s return to Beirut as a doctor .....	215

5. John Wortabet as author and translator .....	222
6. Final observations .....	226
Conclusion: Human interactions as a focus of modern mission history .....	230
Bibliography .....	235
1. Archives .....	235
2. German, English, and Arabic journals of the nineteenth century .....	236
3. ABCFM and PBCFM publications .....	236
4. Additional literature .....	237
5. Websites .....	248
Appendix I: Literary contributions by Smith, Van Dyck, Bustani, and Wortabet for the American Mission Press .....	249
1. Butrus al-Bustani .....	249
2. Eli Smith .....	254
3. Cornelius van Dyck .....	255
4. John Wortabet .....	264
Appendix II: Native helpers and Protestant converts (1823–1900) .....	268
Abstract .....	289
Index .....	290

## ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1: Map with key sites for the Syria Mission in the Ottoman province of Syria  
(Source: Marius König, Graphic Design, Freiburg im Breisgau)
- Figure 2: Mission seminary in 'Abeih  
(Source: MH 64, 1868, p. 393)
- Figure 3: Rev. Eli Smith, D. D.  
(Source: American University of Beirut, Special Collections, "Portrait of Eli Smith, 1800s")
- Figure 4: Title page of the journal *Majmu' Fawa'id* (1851)  
(Source: Harvard Lamont Library)
- Figure 5: Rev. Cornelius Van Dyck, M. D., D. D., L.H.D.  
(Source: Yale Divinity School Library, Henry Harris Jessup Papers, RG 117, Box 10/44)
- Figure 6: Title page from *al-Nashra al-Usubu'iyya* (May 9, 1871)  
(Source: NEST Special Collections)
- Figure 7: Butrus al-Bustani  
(Source: Yale Divinity School Library, Henry Harris Jessup Papers, RG 117, Box 10/44)
- Figure 8: *al-Madrassa al-Wataniyya* (Dormitories for the young students, entrance hall, auditorium and examination room, office and residence of the president and his family)  
(Source: *al-Jinan*, 1873, p. 628b; Harvard Widener Library)
- Figure 9: *al-Madrassa al-Wataniyya* (Elementary school and private schools, recreation rooms for summer and winter)  
(Source: *al-Jinan*, 1873, p. 628d; Harvard Widener Library)
- Figure 10: Rev. John Wortabet, M. D.  
(Source: J. Y. Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu'assasun li l-Jami'a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut* [The Founding Fathers of the American University of Beirut: Biographies], 173)
- Figure 11: The first professors of the Syrian Protestant College, 1870–1874 (First row, left to right: Cornelius Van Dyck, Daniel Bliss, John Wortabet; second row, left to right: David Stuart Dodge, George Post, Edwin Lewis, Harvey Porter)  
(Source: American University of Beirut, Special Collections, "Original Faculty Members, 1870–1874")

## ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Archive of the American University of Beirut
AAC minutes	Anglo-American Congregation, Records (1868–1905)
ABCFM	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
ABC	Archive of the ABCFM, accessible at Harvard University
AUB	American University of Beirut
DMG	Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (German Oriental Society)
HHL	Harvard Houghton Library
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
MH	<i>Missionary Herald</i>
NECB minutes	National Evangelical Church of Beirut, <i>Sijil al-Waqa' i Umdat Ka-nisa al-Injiliyya al-Wataniyya, min 19 Ayar 1848 ila 9 Ayar 1922</i> (Catalog of Committee Minutes from the National Evangelical Church, from May 19, 1848 to May 9, 1922)
NEST.	Near East School of Theology
NEST/SC	Near East School of Theology Library/Special Collections
NLS, MS	National Library of Scotland, Manuscript
PBCFM	Presbyterian Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
ROS	<i>The Missionary Herald: Reports from Ottoman Syria 1819–1870</i> , eds. K. Salibi and Y.K. Khoury, 5 vols. (Beirut, 1995)
SPC	Syrian Protestant College
TA	Translation from Arabic by Tarek Abboud <sup>1</sup>
UPC	United Presbyterian Church of Scotland
UPC-GMBM	United Presbyterian Church General Minute Book, Missions
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i> [Journal of the German Oriental Society]

1 Assistant for the DFG project “Transatlantische Vernetzung von Institutionen des Wissens am Beispiel der Syrienmission des American Board” (Humboldt University, Berlin)



## PREFACE

Without question, my study abroad year at the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut between 2005 and 2006 was a formative experience, strongly influencing the subsequent years of my theology studies and interest in fields like the Arabic language. Before I traveled to Lebanon, I knew little about the Christian minority there, and even less about its smallest group, the Protestants. I learned that they had a great influence on the region's educational sector, although their history in the Middle East began only in the nineteenth century. Already in 2006, I became interested in exploring this history more closely.

The following study is part of the project "Transatlantische Vernetzungen von Institutionen des Wissens am Beispiel der Syria Mission des American Board" (The Syrian Mission of the American Board as an Example of Transatlantic Networking Among Institutions of Learning), directed by Dr. Andreas Feldtkeller, Professor of Religious Studies and Intercultural Theology at the Humboldt University in Berlin, between March 2011 and January 2015. Within the framework of this project, I could make three of the four trips abroad that were necessary to complete my archival research: to Lebanon (March 2013 and March 2014) and Great Britain (June 2014). A grant from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) supported my research at Harvard University in January and February 2011. Without these sources of financial assistance, my dissertation could not have been completed.

I would especially like to thank my colleagues Dr. Christine Lindner (New York), Dr. Deanna Ferree Womack (Atlanta), Dr. Julia Hauser (Kassel), Dr. Sarah Markiewicz (Berlin), and Dominika Hadrysiewicz (Berlin) for their conversations and valuable advice. I am equally grateful to my Arabic-speaking friends Nouhad Moawad, Midu Hafz, and Ayman Sadek, as well as to my colleague Tarek Abboud. They helped me with translations from Arabic on many occasions.

I thank the archivists at Harvard University, the Near East School of Theology, the American University of Beirut, and the National Library of Scotland for their shared research and many helpful suggestions.

Vienna, April 2015



Figure 1: Map with key sites for the Syria Mission in the Ottoman province of Syria

## INTRODUCTION

“The importance of the Mediterranean, as a medium of access to a considerable portion of the great scene of action ... will be felt by all,” wrote the *Missionary Herald* in 1819.<sup>1</sup> The magazine was published by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), founded in Boston in 1810. The ABCFM was the largest interdenominational (Presbyterian, Congregational, and Dutch Reformed) missionary society in North America at that time. Its Palestine Mission was established in 1819, renamed the “Mission to Syria and the Holy Land” nine years later. More than eighty missionaries, sometimes accompanied by wives and female assistants,<sup>2</sup> were sent to the Levant through 1870, when administration of the mission was transferred to the Presbyterian Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The mission field initially extended across the entire Ottoman province of Syria, encompassing the present-day territories of Lebanon, Syria, Israel/Palestine, and Jordan. Its renaming as the “Syria Mission” in 1842 underscored its geographic concentration within the present-day territories of Lebanon and parts of the Syrian Arab Republic. The subject of this study is the American Board’s Syria Mission from the establishment of the Beirut mission station in 1823 until the end of the nineteenth century. The mission was well documented, particularly in the English- and Arabic-speaking world, and it has since been analyzed in numerous studies, from a historical as well as sociocultural perspective. The following monograph draws upon English-language sources that are not accessible within Europe, and also upon relevant Arabic texts that are comprehensible to only a small circle of theologians.

### 1. “THE REST OF THE WORLD NEED[S] CIVILIZING”<sup>3</sup>: BETWEEN CULTURAL ARROGANCE AND LOVE FOR THE FOREIGN

One hundred and fifty years after the first American missionaries were active in Syria, their legacy is ambivalent. This is apparent when one speaks with Protestant or other Christians in Lebanon today, particularly those who are familiar with the history of Protestant missions in the Near East. The missionaries’ educational accomplishments continue to influence present-day Lebanese culture, with far-reaching consequences even outside the Protestant community. At the same time, however,

- 1 *Missionary Herald* 15 (1819), in: *Reports from Ottoman Syria* 1:1. In all subsequent references, the *Missionary Herald* is abbreviated as “MH.” The five-volume *Reports from Ottoman Syria* (eds. Kamal Salibi and Y. Q. Khoury), a reprinted edition of Syria Mission reports that were first published in the MH, is abbreviated as “ROS.”
- 2 Women began to be identified as “missionaries” only at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, women were employed as “female assistants” or “female teachers.”
- 3 Bonk, *The Theory and Practice of Missionary Identification*, 239.

it is frequently said that missionaries treated local religious communities with intolerance, regarding themselves as privileged in their relationship with Arab culture.

The Lebanese sociologist SAMIR KHALAF remarks:

While gladly accepting their long exile from home ... evangelists almost always considered themselves as aliens and strangers wherever they went. They resisted, in fact, any effort or temptation to get closer to, or acquire, even the superficial, exotic or outward artifacts of the native culture.<sup>4</sup>

Beginning in 1819, the ABCFM sent consistently well-educated, engaged young men and women to the region. They had to get to know native culture in order to respond to natives' needs, but – as KHALAF demonstrates – they conveyed an image of western superiority and arrogance in their encounters with everything outside of their highly civilized world.<sup>5</sup> Even after decades of foreign mission work in Syria, many missionaries could not overcome classic prejudices against “the Arabs.”<sup>6</sup> Their view of Islam – a religion grounded upon the false revelations of a deceptive prophet – did not change even after many years of contact with Muslims.<sup>7</sup> It was not uncommon for these views to reach Western readers through missionary reports and also travel literature, since the Orient<sup>8</sup> had become an increasingly popular destination for well-educated, middle-class travelers by the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> With few exceptions, many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century foreign missions<sup>10</sup> were defined not only by Pietist Christian thought but also an intolerance of other peoples. These attitudes were not grounded upon notions of racial supremacy,

4 Khalaf, “New England Puritanism,” 61.

5 Ibid.

6 As Deanna Ferree Womack demonstrates in her dissertation, this did not change within the American Syria Mission until the end of the nineteenth century. See “Conversion, Controversy, and Cultural Production,” 161–221.

7 Khalaf, *Cultural Resistance*, 34.

8 At the time, “Orient” was understood to include not only the Levant, but also the entire “East” (from a European perspective), extending to China and India. The term is used in this study with these geographic considerations in mind.

9 David D. Grafton demonstrates, however, that enthusiasm for the Orient is much older: “the ‘Orient’ has always carried a sense of fascination of the mysterious unknown: its people, their customs, and their religions.” (See Grafton, *Piety, Politics, and Power*, 2) Christian travelers and missionaries in the Levant frequently sought traces of Biblical times. The idea that the region had hardly changed in eighteen hundred years was widespread: “The manners, customs, and dresses of the people at Beyroot served to remind the Christian of the times of Christ, and led back the imagination through the lapse of eighteen hundred years to the thrilling events which transpired throughout the Holy Land. So few are the improvements made in art and agriculture, that one can easily fancy himself in the middle of the first century ...” Here, Daniel C. Eddy describes the impressions of Sarah Smith, the first wife of missionary Eli Smith. See Eddy, *Heroines of the Missionary Enterprise*, 134.

10 In his essay on the beginnings of the Gossner Mission in the nineteenth century, Klaus Roeber describes the missionaries’ respectful engagement with India’s religions, which fostered intercultural and interreligious dialogue from the start. See Roeber, “Missionare der Gossner Mission,” 339–57. Likewise, the German missionary Detwig von Oertzen, who was stationed in Mahabad with the German Orient Mission from 1905, strove “to break down or even to overcome” the stereotype of “Kurdish thieves” through the study of Kurdish culture and language. See Tamcke, “Gleichzeitig-Ungleichzeitiges Wissen,” 399.

which was a much later phenomenon, but rather upon the basis of “civilization.”<sup>11</sup> Missionaries, scholars, colonialists, historians, and philosophers of the day agreed: “The rest of the world need[s] civilizing.”<sup>12</sup> For the missionaries, Christianity naturally played a leading role; it was “the elixir of the Western civilization . . . Like a tonic, the purer it was the better it worked; and the more one took, the healthier one became.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, native peoples abroad were not merely foreign. In the eyes of missionaries, they were also in dire need of Christianity’s saving message.<sup>14</sup>

Numerous parallels existed between American missionary attitudes towards the indigenous Syrian population and the colonial interests of the Western powers.<sup>15</sup> Their prejudices and assurance of superiority could be identified as cultural imperialist.<sup>16</sup> But the missionaries in the Middle East did not pursue political interests, and in fact renounced these vehemently. Nevertheless, certain cultural imperial premises underlay the entire Syria Mission. Thus, as formulated by SAMIR KHALAF, it is more appropriate to speak of the missionaries’ “cultural arrogance.” A politically motivated acquisition of territories certainly did not apply in this case. Rather than dominating a foreign culture, according to KHALAF, missions sought to morally reorient the population.<sup>17</sup> Their methods could be described as “callously ethnocentric and mindlessly romantic, at times poignantly altruistic and confusedly well-meaning.”<sup>18</sup>

Missionaries and Syrians<sup>19</sup> encountered one another in a social space that MARY LOUISE PRATT calls the “contact zone”: “where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power.”<sup>20</sup> Dialogue that takes place in a contact zone may be fruitful, but it is rarely harmonious. Missionaries did not enter this space with the intent of approaching foreigners

11 Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 126. In his article on the intensifying views of nineteenth-century Western Protestants towards evangelizing the world, Andrew Witmer refers to Rebecca Goetz’s thesis that Western attitudes towards non-Christian peoples were later channeled into conceptions of race. See Rebecca Anne Goetz, *The Baptism of Early Virginia: How Christianity Created Race* (Baltimore, 2012), cited in Witmer, “Agency, Race, and Christianity,” 896.

12 Bonk, *The Theory and Practice of Missionary Identification*, 239.

13 *Ibid.*, 244.

14 Nielssen, *Protestant Missions and Local Encounters*, 10.

15 Homi Bhabha speaks of “fixity” in the discourse of colonialism, referring to the rigid definition of otherness and the “daemoniac repetition” of stereotypes. See Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 66. For more on the close relationship between European colonialism and missionary work in Africa and Asia, see Bonk, *The Theory and Practice of Missionary Identification*, 91–155.

16 See Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*; Hutchinson, *Errand to the World*; and Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*.

17 Khalaf, *Cultural Resistance*, 116–17. Similarly, Wanis Semaan describes this as “cultural aggression of a very subtle kind.” See Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 33.

18 T. O. Beidelmann, *Colonial Evangelism* (Bloomington, 1982), cited in Khalaf, *Cultural Resistance*, 117.

19 On the use of “Syrian,” see section 7 in this introduction.

20 Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” 34; and Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 8. Although “contact zone” has the same meaning as “colonial frontier,” the latter term is comprehensible only from a European perspective. “Contact zone” encompasses different perspectives, including those of non-European participants.

without prejudice, nor did they intend to affirm the equal rights of other peoples or acknowledge that others might be in the position to develop the same abilities and skills as themselves. Concepts like “integration” and “religious coexistence” were far removed from this time. To borrow the words of WANIS SEMAAN: given the coming millennium and the urgency for conversions, there was no time to analyze or reflect on “what was culturally conditioned in their message and what was universally valid and true.”<sup>21</sup> America’s short history was characterized by mostly intolerant relations with its native inhabitants, whose culture was not deemed worthy of preservation.<sup>22</sup> Young Americans’ conviction that they had been specially chosen to establish their young state encouraged their belief that savagery and ignorance prevailed beyond its borders. This could be seen in the American movement of religious awakenings. Missionaries from nineteenth-century New England, in particular, felt called to spread their message.<sup>23</sup>

Like merchants, explorers, and diplomats, missionaries acted as cultural brokers, “who actively or deliberately transfer[red] cultural messages or contents to a different environment.”<sup>24</sup> The term “cultural brokers,” which is increasingly favored by historians of intercultural encounters,<sup>25</sup> fits the missionaries perfectly. Their intent was to transmit important components of their own culture – new interpretations of religion and different kinds of knowledge – to the people of another culture. Their field investigations and memoirs, in turn, informed readers in their home country. Thus, cultural transmission occurred in both directions.

To what degree missionaries in Syria acted in a cultural imperialist or colonialist manner is a frequent question in recent scholarship. In my view, this is a very one-sided approach.<sup>26</sup> This is not to say, however, that cultural imperialism can be disregarded. Building up, and then dominating, the education sector was a typical practice of European countries at this time. In this way, economic influence over another country was gradually established, instead of being compelled within a shorter timeframe through military occupation.<sup>27</sup> Fully aware of the cultural imperialist connotations of missionary activity, the ABCFM rejected insinuations that it represented the United States’ colonial interests from the very beginning. As time passed, greater efforts were made to act less imperially and to focus solely on preaching.<sup>28</sup> The reports,

21 Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 2.

22 Lindner, “Negotiating the Field,” 33. To identify as American in the eighteenth or nineteenth century meant being white and Protestant. Lindner notes that “in 1830, the United States Supreme Court ruled that American citizenship was limited to those of European descent,” thereby legitimizing the exclusion of native inhabitants. *Ibid.*, 38.

23 Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 32.

24 Höh, Jaspert, and Oesterle, “Courts, Brokers and Brokerage,” 9.

25 Koschorke, “Weltmission, Globale Kommunikationsstrukturen,” 197.

26 See Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 2: “Had the missionaries been historically and culturally conscious, they would have understood better and would have attempted to understand the histories and the cultures of the societies to which they went . . . . But alas, they were conditioned only of their own culture and not of its conditional nature.”

27 Scholz, *Foreign Education and Indigenous Reaction*, 16–17.

28 Harris, *Nothing but Christ*, 96. American missionaries even accused their French rivals of encouraging imperial interests in the Levant. See Lindner, “Negotiating the Field,” 134.

letters, and diaries that missionaries composed in the field, as seen through the eyes of contemporary readers, contain many derogatory descriptions of the native population. The missionaries were unable to interpret their environment through standards other than their own. They saw their own experiences as universal, suitable for guiding their actions in the mission field.<sup>29</sup> With respect to the missionaries' handwritten correspondence, however, the ideological influence of the American Board cannot be underestimated. The length and wording of missionary reports that appeared in the *Missionary Herald* and other publications were altered strategically, as this study will show. Such changes were often motivated by a desire to convince American readers of the ongoing necessity of foreign missions, or to retain generous donors.

It was missionaries who communicated the linguistic, geographic, historical, and cultural definitions of the Near East to Americans. Missionaries had a formative influence on Oriental studies in the United States; for many decades, they were the first and only source of information on foreign cultures.<sup>30</sup> In a sense, they were their country's first diplomats. As "ambassadors for Christ,"<sup>31</sup> as they often called themselves, they not uncommonly discovered a love for the land and people they sought to convert. In some cases, the engagement of American missionaries extended well beyond the scope of their official duties and was not always condoned by the ABCFM. This point is an important condition for the following analysis of cultural dialogue.

Eli Smith (1801–1857), Cornelius Van Dyck (1818–1895), Butrus al-Bustani (1819–1883) und John Wortabet (1827–1908) were chosen as subjects of this study because of their impressive biographies, as well as the comparative accessibility of primary and secondary source material about them. Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck were distinguished by their extraordinary mastery of the Arabic language, as well as by their engagement for education and their participation in Syrian intellectual circles. Butrus al-Bustani, the renowned Syrian scholar, and John Wortabet – a Syrian of Armenian descent, a foster child of the mission and later a successful theologian and medical doctor – were participants in the circle of Smith, Van Dyck, and their colleagues. Their life stories would have been unthinkable without the influence of the American missionaries. Rather than acting as subordinates, however, Bustani and Wortabet used their expanded cultural horizons to achieve successful careers.

## 2. CONDITIONS FOR TRANSCULTURAL DIALOGUE

The phenomenon of "transculturation" has assumed an increasingly prominent role in recent historical scholarship. The term describes "processes of translation, adaptation, regeneration, and appropriation" that occur – sometimes in harmony,

29 Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 3.

30 New knowledge about the Arab world led to the introduction of Oriental studies in numerous universities in Europe and North America. See S. Mangold, "Eine 'weltbürgerliche Wissenschaft' – Die deutsche Orientalistik im 19. Jahrhundert, Beiträge zur Universitäts- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte 11 (Stuttgart: Pallas Athene, 2004) 29–63.

31 MH 20 (1824), in: ROS 1, 235.

sometimes in conflict – when different cultures meet.<sup>32</sup> The complexity of transculturation is readily apparent in the American missionaries' encounter with Syrians in the Ottoman Empire. This intercultural encounter, which led to different situations of dialogue, had diverse motivations. The cultural context of the young Americans, who felt called to their mission in the Middle East, could not be more different from that of nineteenth-century Europeans who came from big cities. The young American missionaries usually came from small towns, and they had been educated at Christian schools. They were pious and highly ambitious. Many of them had earned university degrees, a distinction enjoyed by only two percent of Americans at that time.<sup>33</sup> Christianity assumed special prominence. In the northern United States, the Bible was the basis for instruction in schools, which were still subject to church authority at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup>

“From our childhood our idea of the Christian religion has been identified with education, social order, and a certain correctness of morals and manners, in other words, with civilization,”<sup>35</sup> stated Rufus Anderson, corresponding secretary of the ABCFM.<sup>36</sup> Learning to read and write was essential for a religious education and the pursuit of one's chosen path.<sup>37</sup> For the Americans, a proper education brought together religious and secular knowledge.<sup>38</sup> Both types of knowledge were incomplete without the other. This philosophy of education accompanied the missionaries on their journey to the Levant, informing the establishment of the first mission school in 1824. In Ottoman Syria, the Americans found a wide hearing. They enjoyed particular success in the field of education because political and social changes smoothed the way. The province of Syria represented, as CHRISTINE LINDNER calls it, a “dynamic environment.”<sup>39</sup>

Building ports and opening markets to transcontinental trade promoted globalization, setting the stage for political and cultural disruptions – not only in the Ottoman Empire, but also in other Asian and African countries.<sup>40</sup> “It is not the Napoleonic invasion nor the Egyptian occupation in itself that brought about the

32 Hock, *Einführung in die Interkulturelle Theologie*, 51.

33 Khalaf, “New England Puritanism and Liberal Education,” 54–55; and Khalaf, *Cultural Resistance*, 181.

34 Government authorities in New England assumed responsibility for education only in 1852. See Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England*, 59.

35 Rufus Anderson in 1870, as cited by Khalaf, “New England Puritanism and Liberal Education,” 58.

36 At the beginning of the Syria Mission, Anderson was still assistant corresponding secretary. Through his administrative and organizational talents, he later became the American Board's head corresponding secretary. See Badr, “Mission to ‘Nominal Christians,’” 106–7.

37 Lindsay, *Nineteenth Century American Schools*, 33. In 1642, the state of Massachusetts passed a law that required families to see that their children and apprentices receive instruction in reading and writing, Christian principles, and the most important laws of the land. See also Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England*, 66. The first public schools in Massachusetts, however, were not introduced until 1820. See Lindner, “Negotiating the Field,” 50.

38 Lindner, “Negotiating the Field,” 138.

39 *Ibid.*, 105.

40 Conrad, “Enlightenment in Global History,” 999–1027.

racial transformation, but the opening of the way for cultural inflow that counted.”<sup>41</sup> Cultural dialogue occurred because the Americans learned over time that success depended upon respectful behavior. At first, their interest in dialogue derived solely from their Christian convictions. Syrian Christians and Muslims of different confessions,<sup>42</sup> on the other hand, proved very receptive to the new religion’s possibilities. Their motives for engaging in dialogue were often not only religious. Hope for a better future, family disagreements, and opportunities for professional success also played a role. Nonetheless, joining the new Protestant community entailed sacrifices. Syrian society was not yet a well-defined cultural entity. Tradition and a sense of belonging derived from the religion of one’s parents. Protestant converts had to be prepared to overstep previously accepted cultural boundaries for their newfound convictions.

### 3. PAST AND CURRENT RESEARCH

In the 1980s, there was a tendency to criticize and stereotype the history of missions from a postcolonial and gender studies perspective. The past decade has seen a shift towards considering ethnographic texts individually, as well as towards incorporating indigenous sources (DOUMATO, 2002). The intent is to give voice to native collaborators, since their influence on the missions’ achievements was substantial. Evaluating missionary sources is no longer only the domain of mission studies, but has also attracted interest in other fields such as sociology, cultural studies, and geography. Taking the historical and social context of each mission country into consideration is essential for better understanding how missions developed in the past. Mission studies are increasingly undertaken within the framework of intercultural theology.<sup>43</sup> Each discipline has its own set of questions for investigating the actions and consequences of Western missionaries abroad. Missionaries in the field often accomplished pioneering work, not only as theologians, but also as humanists and natural scientists. Mission history today is understood as a part of “secular” cultural history that must incorporate different points of view.<sup>44</sup>

In 2010, an international conference on “Mission History as Global History: Transcultural Appropriation and Transfer of Knowledge by Christian Missionaries in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Africa and Asia” was held in cooperation with the Department for Religious and Mission Studies at the Humboldt University in Berlin, and the Berlin Society for Mission History.<sup>45</sup> The conference showed “that questions discussed by other historical disciplines, concerning globalization

41 Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, 453.

42 The beginning of chapter I examines which confessional groups were most drawn to the missionaries’ message.

43 Hock, *Einführung in die Interkulturelle Theologie*, especially 21–23.

44 Rzepkowski, “Missionsgeschichte im Wandel der Motivationen,” 270–75.

45 Also in 2010, the University of Zurich organized an international symposium on “Europe in China – China in Europe: Science and Technology as a Vehicle to Intercultural Dialogue.” See Widmer, ed., *Europe in China – China in Europe*.

in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, have also been addressed in the historiography of missions in an interesting way.<sup>46</sup>

Missionary institutions of education, according to conference organizers ULRICH VAN DER HEYDEN and ANDREAS FELDTKELLER, were sites (or “contact zones”<sup>47</sup>) where Western educational traditions merged with those of a foreign culture, resulting in the emergence of “something new for both sides.”<sup>48</sup> At these sites, knowledge was both produced and transformed, which is why missionary institutions of education can be viewed as hubs in the emerging globalization of knowledge.<sup>49</sup>

The goal of this study is not to provide an overview of the wide-ranging literature on the ABCFM or the numerous chronologies of the Syria Mission. A key source is *Reports from Ottoman Syria*, which was compiled by KAMAL SALIBI und YUSUF KHOURY in 1995. It is a collection of reports that first appeared in the *Missionary Herald* between 1819 and 1870. Another essential source is RUFUS ANDERSON’S two-volume *History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Oriental Churches*, which presents the Syria Mission within the comparative context of other missions in the Middle East. Another American missionary affiliated with the ABCFM, THOMAS LAURIE, detailed missionaries’ contributions to the natural sciences, the translation of the Bible, geography, history, medicine, and much more in his comprehensive and distinguished *Ely Volume* (1881). Missionaries thus contributed to society’s “regeneration,” as LAURIE describes here:

Our missionaries go abroad to impart all that is good in our Christian civilization to other lands. In diffusing our ideas of the true office of government they secure the rights of the people and kindle a spirit of patriotism where previously it was unknown. ... They carry our free popular education to quicken intellectual life; bring out to view the inherent evil of vice, slavery, and polygamy; elevate men’s ideas of comfort, and so promote industry; they lift up woman from her degradation to her true place in the family; and so work out a nobler destiny for man wherever they go, even in this present life.<sup>50</sup>

The first comprehensive German-language study of the American missions in the Near East was PETER KAWERAU’S *Amerika und die Orientalischen Kirchen* (1958),<sup>51</sup> which depicted the theological and historical origins of North American missions and provided a chronology of events for the Middle Eastern missions of the ABCFM. In the hope of finding “signs of an original and unspoiled Christianity,” the missionaries undertook geographical investigations that influenced American

46 Heyden and Feldtkeller, eds., *Missionsgeschichte als Geschichte der Globalisierung von Wissen*, 11.

47 Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” 34; Marten, *Protestant Missions and Local Encounters*, 305.

48 Heyden and Feldtkeller, eds., *Missionsgeschichte als Geschichte der Globalisierung von Wissen*, 11.

49 Ibid., 12.

50 Laurie, *The Ely Volume*, 473.

51 In the second volume of his *Allgemeine Evangelische Missionsgeschichte* (1930), Julius Richter laid the foundation for German-language research on missions in the Orient. The American mission, however, is hardly covered in his work. I have also contributed to the German-language scholarship in this field, building upon the work of Richter and Kawerau. The following study was first published in German by the Franz Steiner Verlag in 2016.

studies of the Orient.<sup>52</sup> Similar to Palestinian historian ABDUL LATIF TIBAWI (*American Interests in Syria, 1800–1901*, published in 1966), KAWERAU did not provide a detailed account of the missionaries' cultural and social engagement beyond the goal of their mission. The following study seeks to address this gap, providing illustrative examples. TIBAWI's work depicted the cultural work of the Americans in Syria much more thoroughly than KAWERAU. He wanted to dispel the stereotype that the missionaries helped to revive a long forgotten cultural heritage by publishing classical Arabic literature.<sup>53</sup> TIBAWI distanced himself from GEORGE ANTONIUS's *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (1938), which depicted Western mission work and the Egyptian occupation as a cradle for the "rehabilitation of the Arabic language as a vehicle of thought."<sup>54</sup> ANTONIUS correctly credited American institutions of higher education in Syria for their great contribution to the dissemination of literature and scholarship:

The educational activities of the American Missionaries in that early period, had among many virtues, one outstanding merit; they gave the pride of place to Arabic, and once they had committed themselves to teaching in it, put their shoulders with vigour to the task of providing an adequate literature.<sup>55</sup>

A new trend in the historical research of missions became apparent in the 1960s, led by ABDUL LATIF TIBAWI. Scholars began to turn a critical eye towards the methods used by Americans to train Syrian converts as preachers, and to otherwise carry out their cultural and scholarly work. Americans did not merely impart the Protestant faith; they also presented themselves as culturally superior. The previously mentioned study by TIBAWI from 1966 showed that the ABCFM sought to uphold a hierarchy that made it impossible for newly trained native preachers to work as equals with their American colleagues. USSAMA MAKDISI, a professor at Rice University in Houston, has investigated the activities of American missionaries in the Middle East for many years. In his 2008 book *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East*, MAKDISI describes the missionaries' prejudicial stance towards "uncivilized" and "religiously depraved" natives, which was accompanied by an idealized vision of American culture and the "orientalizing"<sup>56</sup> of the Arab world.<sup>57</sup> Soon after the first missionaries arrived, girls and boys were "civilized" in schools according to Western norms and compelled to adopt a for-

52 Kawerau, *Amerika und die Orientalischen Kirchen*, 413–24.

53 Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 252–53. There were other printing presses in Syria before the American Mission Press in Beirut. Over the course of the nineteenth century, presses particularly in Cairo and Istanbul established a reputation for printing classical literature. See chapter I, section 1.1.

54 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 40.

55 *Ibid.*, 43.

56 Makdisi uses this term in the sense of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), which concerns the centuries-old distortions that have informed the Western world's portrayal of the countries of the Middle East and Asia. A thorough analysis of Orientalism in American literature and society can be found in Malinie Johar Schueller, *U. S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature, 1790–1890* (Ann Arbor, 2001); and Heike Schäfer, *America and the Orient*, American Studies – A Monograph Series 130 (Heidelberg, 2006).

57 Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 13.

eign culture. MAKDISI asserts that too much focus has been placed on the American side of this history, to the neglect of indigenous sources. In *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations: 1820–2001* (2010), MAKDISI expands upon the foundations that he laid in *Artillery of Heaven*, placing the Syria Mission and its historical setting within the larger political context of Arab-American relations. His central focus is the picture of the United States that the Arab world has created over time. From today's perspective, the dialogue between the United States and the Middle East began not through military, but rather Christian ambitions. The missionaries "set in motion a long process of interaction between Americans and Arabs that gave birth to the first great idea of America in the Arab world."<sup>58</sup> Despite a long history of misunderstandings between the two cultures, MAKDISI wants to show that changes in the Middle East, which were sparked by Western influences already in the nineteenth century, did not simply involve the adaptation of Western ideas in the Arab world.

In his anthology *Cultural Resistance: Global and Local Encounters in the Middle East* (2001), the aforementioned Lebanese sociologist SAMIR KHALAF describes the Syria Mission's approach to education and social assistance as "silent" or "cultural" penetration. These forms of penetration, according to KHALAF, "reach deeper into the 'soul of native societies' than essentially 'utilitarian economic and political forms of imperialism.'"<sup>59</sup> In the spirit of Christian benevolence, but with limited cultural awareness, the missionaries sought "to spread a nation's vision of society and culture to an alien and often subjected people,"<sup>60</sup> despite the risk of alienating this people from their own culture. KHALAF repeatedly emphasizes that, in the end, the results of missionary work in Syria strayed widely from the original intentions of the ABCFM. The missionaries' results were "by-products of both their good intentions and their considerable ignorance of the areas they were seeking to evangelize."<sup>61</sup>

Despite the growing focus on indigenous converts in contemporary mission studies, to this point there have been few studies of the Syria Mission that have also given voice to Syrian Protestants. An important exception is American historian CHRISTINE B. LINDNER's work on the nineteenth-century "Protestant Circle," which included both Syrian and foreign participants. In her 2009 dissertation "Negotiating the Field: American Protestant Missionaries in Ottoman Syria, 1823–1860," LINDNER focuses on individual members of this community, analyzing the networks that joined them. Her goal is to portray the broader context of American-Syrian encounters and to analyze the relationships and divergences that emerged, "instead of only positing the question 'was missionary enterprise a tool of imperialism.'"<sup>62</sup> According to Lindner, the Americans did not introduce American Protestantism into a sterile and passive society. The dissolution of the *iqṭā* (a system of governance on Mount Lebanon that empowered local hierarchies), the economic opening of Syria,

58 Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 19.

59 Khalaf, *Cultural Resistance*, 33, 118–19, citing Schlesinger, "The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism," 365–73.

60 Khalaf, *Cultural Resistance*, 116.

61 *Ibid.*, 134.

62 Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 5.

and the evolution of religious identities over the course of the nineteenth century all contributed significantly to Syrians' receptiveness to American influences.<sup>63</sup> By emphasizing the question of gender, Lindner's dissertation and subsequent studies of individuals such as Rahil 'Ata al-Bustani<sup>64</sup> and Susan Wortabet<sup>65</sup> introduce a previously unexplored angle for understanding the lives of nineteenth-century Syrian Protestant women.<sup>66</sup> The involvement of these women in the work of evangelism, as well as their written contributions to the American Mission Press in Beirut, is demonstrated by DEANNA FERREE WOMACK in her work on "Arab Women and Protestant Missions: Gendered Practices of Reading, Writing, and Preaching in Ottoman Syria, 1860–1914."<sup>67</sup> This is part of her recently completed dissertation, "Conversion, Controversy, and Cultural Production: Syrian Protestants, American Missionaries, and the Arabic Press, 1870–1914."

MARIA B. ABUNASSR investigates the biographies of second- and third-generation Syrian Protestant men in her dissertation, "The Making of Ras Beirut: A Landscape of Memory for Narratives of Exceptionalism, 1870–1975" (2013). Through interviews and private memoirs, she retraces the lives of six Syrian Protestants in Anglo-American-dominated Ras Beirut, then on the city's outskirts.<sup>68</sup>

A reading of the secondary literature on Eli Smith, Cornelius Van Dyck, Butrus al-Bustani, and John Wortabet reveals that its authors have tended to focus on a certain aspect of these individuals' lives, rather than presenting a comprehensive portrait of their conflicts, friendships, and other life circumstances. DAGMAR GLAß points to Smith's key role in the printing of Arabic literature in the Middle East (*Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut Again: Eli Smith, the American Syria Mission and the Spread of Arabic Typography in 19th Century Lebanon*, 1998). The American Mission Press's development of a new typeface, American Arabic Type, encouraged the printing of Arabic books within and outside Syria, as well as "the emergence of Arabic *periodicals*, newspapers, but more to what we are now used to calling magazines. This is why Smith's endeavors in the spread of Arabic typography take on such a special meaning."<sup>69</sup> The American pastor ROBERT D. STODDARD, JR. shows in his short study, *The Rev. Eli Smith, 1801–1857: Evangelical Orientalist in the Levant* (2009), that Eli Smith can be considered the first American orientalist in the Levant. Through his geographic and linguistic studies, Smith set a high standard for his successors to follow. Except for primary source material from the ABCFM and some biographical notes, there are no further thematic studies of this extraordinary missionary in Syria.

63 Ibid., 264.

64 Lindner, "Rahil 'Ata al-Bustani." Rahil was the wife of Butrus al-Bustani.

65 The results of this study were presented at the Historikertag in Göttingen (September 2014). Susan Wortabet was John Wortabet's mother.

66 See also Linder, "Making a Way into the Heart of the People," as well as her impressive research in "Syrian Protestant Families."

67 She delivered a talk with this title at the Yale-Edinburgh Group's June 2014 conference on "Gender and Family in the History of Missions and World Christianity."

68 Abunassr, "The Making of Ras Beirut," 132–83.

69 Glaß, *Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut Again*, 29.

There is a broader secondary literature on Cornelius Van Dyck, including works by many Arabic-speaking authors.<sup>70</sup> Through his role at the Syrian Protestant College,<sup>71</sup> as well as his work on different textbooks, he remains a well-known figure in Lebanon today. After LUTFI M. SA'DI'S 1937 essay, "Al-Hakim Cornelius Van Alen Van Dyck (1818–1895)," Lebanese historian YUSUF QASMA KHURI dedicated his 1965 master's thesis, "al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk wa Nahda al-Diyar al-Shamiya al-'Amiya fi Qarn al-Tasi 'Ashar" (Dr. Cornelius Van Dyck and the Nahda in Nineteenth-Century Syria) to Van Dyck's scholarly achievements. The thesis was reprinted in 1990. DAGMAR GLAB'S 1998 essay, "Der Missionar Cornelius van Dyck (1818–1895) als Lehrbuchautor und Förderer des arabischen Wissenschaftsjournalismus," addresses a similar theme. Van Dyck communicated regularly with numerous protagonists of the Syrian *nahda*, and he helped to promote their scholarly careers. GLAB sees his role as "the most valuable and effective single influence ever exerted by a foreigner in the cultural development of the country."<sup>72</sup>

There are numerous biographies and other scholarly works on Butrus al-Bustani, one of the most influential intellectuals in nineteenth-century Syria.<sup>73</sup> Among the most recent is a 2014 collection of English-language essays on Bustani, edited by ADEL BESHARA. In addition to previously published contributions by ALBERT HOURANI<sup>74</sup> and STEPHEN SHEEH,<sup>75</sup> the collection offers new analyses of Bustani's speeches and published works, demonstrating how Bustani shaped the "spirit of his age" and influenced many thinkers in the nineteenth century and beyond.<sup>76</sup> ABDUL LATIF TIBAWI ("The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani," 1963) and USSAMA MAKDISI (*Artillery of Heaven*, 2008) had already opened up a critical discussion about Bustani's role in the mission and how it influenced his work as a scholar. For Tibawi, "Bustani's story is an excellent example of the outcome of a successful and balanced interaction of Western ideas and methods with Arabic ideas and methods,"<sup>77</sup> while Makdisi focuses more on the differences between the Syrian Protestant and his American colleagues. Bustani's ecumenical mindset was more of an Arab-American synthesis than only Arab or only American, but his vision of

70 For example, Matar, "al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk"; and Tafili, "Kurnilyus Fan Dayk dud Danil Bliss fi Beirut."

71 See chapter I, section 1.5; and chapter II, section 2.4.

72 Glab, "Der Missionar Cornelius van Dyck," 185.

73 For example, the dissertations by John W. Jandora (1981) and Yusuf Q. Khuri (1995), as well as the following studies: Jan Daya, *al-mu'allim Butrus al-Bustani: Dirasa wa watha'iq* (The Scholar Butrus al-Bustani: Studies and Documents), Silsila Fajr al-Nahda 1 (Beirut, 1981); and Faris Qays, *Athar al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustani fi Nahdat al-Wataniyya fi Lubnan* (The Scholar Butrus al-Bustani's Influence on Lebanon's Cultural Movement) (Beirut, 2005). The first three authors include source materials in their works that are otherwise difficult to access.

74 "Bustani's Encyclopedia."

75 "Butrus al-Bustani's *Nafir Surriyah* and the National Subject as Effect."

76 Beshara, *Butrus al-Bustani: Spirit of the Age*. Without question, an essay collection that brings together past and current research on Butrus al-Bustani has filled a great need. Nevertheless, it should be critically noted that the authors hardly consider Bustani's letters – whether to the mission, the ABCFM, or the SPC – relying instead, in many cases, on past interpretations by the historians Abdul Latif Tibawi und Ussama Makdisi.

77 Tibawi, "The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani," 182.

peaceful coexistence in Syria was premised upon a secular social order in which nationality commanded a more prominent role than religious identity. Bustani's attitude towards cross-cultural dialogue was highly positive, as reflected in the content of his reference works and the journals he edited. For DAGMAR GLAB (*Butrus al-Bustani [1819–1883] als Enzyklopädiker der arabischen Renaissance*, 2008), Bustani's works were characterized by a “double transfer” – integrating Western knowledge, while also preserving that of the Orient – although the European and Arabic literary sources that he drew from can no longer be reconstructed.<sup>78</sup>

Unlike Bustani, John Wortabet has not figured prominently in research on the Syria Mission. A thorough study of the Syrian Protestant and medical doctor has not been written. LINDNER (*Negotiating the Field*, 2009) tracks the Wortabet family in her dissertation, identifying the family's experiences and engagement throughout the different phases of the American mission. The Scottish religious scholar and historian MICHAEL MARTEN deals with Wortabet's later career as a missionary in Aleppo in *Attempting to Bring the Gospel Home: Scottish Missions to Palestine, 1839–1917* (2006). Excerpts from Wortabet's letters to the Scottish missionary society, which are cited in Marten's study, provide insight into the different periods in the Armenian Syrian's life. During my research, I viewed these letters in person.

#### 4. GOALS OF THIS STUDY

Missionaries and their native helpers worked together in Syria for more than half a century. In this study, their broad cultural cooperation is depicted through the examples of four individuals. I believe that Smith, Van Dyck, Bustani, and Wortabet are among the most interesting and influential protagonists of the American-Syrian encounter. In their own distinct ways, each made a great contribution towards uniting modern scholarship with the cultural heritage of Syria.

Although numerous studies depict the history of the Syria Mission, many questions remain unanswered; some aspects of the mission have received only cursory investigation. Particularly in the past twenty years, more and more missiologists, historians, Arabists, and social scientists have turned their attention to the work of the Americans in the Ottoman Empire, and also to its consequences. The topic continues to provoke lively debate. Many of these studies have helped to form the questions that are addressed on the following pages. This investigation incorporates and adds to these studies.

The aforementioned secondary literature usually associates Van Dyck and Bustani with the *nahḍa*,<sup>79</sup> the cultural awakening that unfolded in nineteenth-century Syria (and Egypt). Smith and Wortabet, however, have received little attention in historical studies of missions. Wortabet, in particular, is depicted here compre-

78 Glab, “Butrus al-Bustani (1819–1883) als Enzyklopädiker der arabischen Renaissance,” 123–24. Arabist Michel Qabalan, too, considers the question of reconstructing Bustani's sources in his soon-to-be-completed dissertation at the Freie Universität Berlin, “The *Da'irat al-Ma'arif* of Butrus al-Bustani: Encyclopedic Visions from the late Ottoman Levant.”

79 Characteristics and milestones of the *nahḍa* are discussed thoroughly in chapter I, section 2.5.

hensively for the first time, thereby filling a gap in the scholarship of the American Syria Mission.

A goal of this investigation is to show that results of the missionaries' work were not coincidental "byproducts" of the interplay between missionary intentions and cultural ignorance, as KHALAF has described them. For one, missionaries frequently had differing opinions about the practices that were promoted by their sponsoring society. They must, therefore, be considered as individual actors.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, the cultural contributions of missionaries with such wide-ranging interests were certainly not coincidental, but rather exerted a strong influence on the Syrian cultural renaissance (*nahḍa*). This kind of "unplanned"<sup>81</sup> engagement highlights discrepancies between missionaries on site and the ABCFM administration in Boston – an aspect that has not yet been closely considered. In the Syria Mission, theory and practice did not always conform. As will be discussed on the following pages, the goals set by Anderson could not always be implemented in Syria as he intended.

This investigation further demonstrates that an enthusiasm for learning and the dissemination of knowledge inspired the chosen missionaries and their Syrian colleagues alike; the missionaries did not see this as an alternative to unsuccessful conversion work.

Portraits of the life and work of the missionaries Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck, as well of the Syrian Protestants Butrus al-Bustani and John Wortabet, demonstrate that personal relationships were often decisive for intercultural cooperation. Even when these relationships were strained by conflicts, geographical distance, or even death, they exerted a lasting effect on the lives of the Syrian Protestants and American missionaries.

## 5. OVERVIEW

The first chapter of this book will outline the mission's most important features, as well as its cultural and historical context in Syria. This includes the institutionalization of mission work through the establishment of congregations, schools, colleges, and a press, as well historical events in the Ottoman Empire and socio-cultural changes. All of these elements were interrelated and should not be consid-

80 Wolcott to Anderson (Beirut, June 1, 1842): ABC 16.5., Vol. 3: "There is union among us in sentiment, but there is also difference and divergence – particularly in respect to forms, organizations, adaptations etc. The destruction is generic – affects the tastes, habits, feelings and principles; – is partly original, and partly the result of circumstances. Both classes of sentiments ... are founded on a large experience."

81 Anderson warned about this in 1845: "The missionary prepares new fields for pastors; and when they are thus prepared, and competent pastors are upon the ground, he ought himself to move onward. ... And whatever may be said with respect to pastors, it is true of the missionary, that he is to keep himself as free as possible from entanglements with literature, science, and commerce, and with questions of church government, politics and social order." See also Rufus Anderson, "The Theory of Missions to the Heathen, A Sermon at the Ordination of Mr. Edward Webb, a Missionary to the Heathen," (Ware, Massachusetts, October 23, 1845), as cited in Beaver, *To Advance the Gospel*, 76.

ered in isolation. The second chapter investigates the drive behind Eli Smith's and Cornelius Van Dyck's unparalleled work ethic. Their work as translators, teachers, scholars, and printers of Arabic books required extraordinary endurance. This chapter documents both individuals' unique motivations to act as cultural brokers. Their contributions to science and learning cannot be overestimated. The third chapter is devoted to Syrian Protestants within the contact zone. They were often neglected in the missionaries' writings, although they were the intended audience of the mission. The biographies of Butrus al-Bustani and John Wortabet are representative of Syrian Protestants who worked closely with the missionaries but did not remain in their shadows. This chapter demonstrates how these two successful scholars were influenced by their cooperation with the Americans. Was their cultural dialogue with the Americans a failure because they ultimately chose to go their own ways?

After the conclusion, an appendix lists the literary contributions of the four selected individuals for the American Mission Press, compiled for the first time here with comments and annotations. The Arabic books listed here are either translations, compilations of works by other authors, or original writings that were noteworthy in their scope or reception. It was not uncommon for only missionaries to be named as editors, for author credits to be missing entirely, or for Syrian helpers not to be acknowledged in translations that were completed as a team.<sup>82</sup> Thus, this listing of American Mission Press publications cannot claim to be comprehensive.

Numerous Syrian Protestants, as well as Syrians who worked for the mission but did not convert (identified by the mission as "native helpers" or "native assistants"), are mentioned in this study. A second appendix provides a means to learn more about the biographies of these persons, about whom little is known because few sources exist. In this way, I draw attention to the individuals whose identities and roles within the Syrian Protestant community were frequently overshadowed by that of the missionaries.

## 6. NOTES ON SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

As mentioned above, my work draws from and complements a number of current studies and analyses. However, during the research process it became apparent that few private documents – like personal correspondence with family, friends, and colleagues – were available. The papers of Eli Smith, which have not yet been thoroughly explored, are a significant exception. For this project, I accessed Smith's documents and letters to colleagues and friends, written in English and Arabic, at the archive of the ABCFM at Harvard University. Yale University possesses Smith's private papers, including numerous letters to his family.<sup>83</sup> The additional

82 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, March 13, 1856): ABC 60 (105), (HHL). Original documents from the ABCFM at the Harvard Houghton Library are identified with the abbreviation "HHL." All other documents from this archive were viewed on microfilm (see bibliography).

83 See Yale Divinity School, Special Collections, Eli Smith Family Papers, Record Group 124, accessed August 2013, [http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/saxon/SaxonServlet?style=http://drs.library.yale](http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/saxon/SaxonServlet?style=http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/saxon/EAD/yul.ead2002.xhtml.xml&source=http://drs.library.yale)

use of these sources would have been appropriate for a separate, more comprehensive study on Eli Smith alone. Unfortunately, the ABCFM archive does not have a collection of Cornelius Van Dyck's personal letters – which does not, however, mean that such letters did not exist. Multiple research trips to Lebanon unearthed little personal information about Van Dyck, Bustani, or Wortabet. The interactions of Smith, Van Dyck, Bustani, and Wortabet can therefore be only partially reconstructed. Van Dyck's letters to the ABCFM are particularly helpful in tracing his personal development as well as his positions on the strategies of Western missions. With the aid of the textbooks he wrote in Arabic, articles he published in Arabic periodicals, and through the remarks of his Syrian contemporaries, it is possible to trace Van Dyck's personal development over the more than fifty years he spent in Syria.

Bustani's own writings, and the secondary literature about him, are extensive. This investigation incorporates the most central texts, as well as those related to Bustani's relationship with the ABCFM and the Anglo-American Protestant community. It is unfortunate that the personal papers of this great nineteenth-century thinker may have been lost or destroyed in the wars that have shaken this region. Through my research in the United States and Lebanon, I could view at least a few private letters and pieces of official correspondence from Bustani, translating them for the first time. I am hopeful that the continued efforts of the Bustani family members who are still alive today will bring new findings to light.

Letters from John Wortabet and reports from the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland are accessible at the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh. These papers provide insight into the conflict between Wortabet and the ABCFM, which resulted in his move to the Scottish mission in Aleppo. I was able to reconstruct Wortabet's biography, and the barriers that he confronted in his lifetime, through the few letters that he wrote to the ABCFM, as well as through the numerous reports that were written about him by American missionaries and other SPC personnel.

For those interested in studying the Protestant missions of the Middle East in greater depth, the archives of the American University of Beirut (AUB), and particularly the Near East School of Theology (NEST), hold valuable original documents. Only a small portion of these have been digitized and thus are accessible to the public.<sup>84</sup> My research in both archives produced valuable findings for this investigation.

edu:8083/fedora/get/divinity:124/EAD&big=&adv=&query=%2522Eli%20Smith%2522&altquery=&filter=&hitPageStart=1&sortFields=&view=all.

84 For the past several years, both institutions have been digitizing and working through their archives. Since 2011, the Saab Medical Library (SML) of the AUB has maintained a web page that provides access to the medical books of missionaries, as well as to the medical journal *al-Tabib* (The Doctor) that was published by the Syrian Protestant College (see chapter I, section 1.5). See SML Historical Collection, accessed May 2016, <http://www.aub.edu.lb/libraries/sml/resources/Pages/digitized-historical.aspx>. Since 2012, the NEST has supported a project that provides researchers with access to unique sources related to the history of Protestantism in the Middle East. See Preserving Protestant Heritage in the Middle East, accessed May 2014, <https://protestantheritage.nest.omeka.net>.

With respect to the Americans' reception within Syrian society, the documents of Syrian contemporaries who were educated at American institutions and later became prominent authors and journalists (Jurji Zaydan,<sup>85</sup> Gregory Wortabet,<sup>86</sup> Faris Nimr, Ya'qub Sarruf,<sup>87</sup> Habib R. A. Effendi,<sup>88</sup> and As'ad Y. Kayat<sup>89</sup>) provided further sources for this investigation. Only isolated examples of letters from "native helpers" are found in the ABCFM archive. Although they were the mission's intended audience, as previously mentioned, their voice is seldom heard. Thus, the writings of Bustani and Wortabet provide a glimpse into the thoughts of Syrian Protestants in the nineteenth century.

For this study, I consulted the most important Arabic-language sources and relevant secondary literature either in the original Arabic,<sup>90</sup> or from translations that were prepared by Tarek Abboud<sup>91</sup> for a research project of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). Unfortunately, the lectures given by Americans and Syrians for the Syrian Society of Arts and Sciences, and also Bustani's eleven pamphlets *Nafir Suriyya* (The Syrian Clarion)—in their message, still relevant today — are among the sources not yet available in any published translation.

## 7. NOTES ON THE TRANSLITERATION OF PROPER NAMES AND GEOGRAPHIC DESIGNATIONS

The transliteration of Arabic names, place names, book titles, and quotations follows the guidelines of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES). For example, if prepositions such as bi-, wa-, li-, la- are followed by the Arabic article al-, "the a will elide," as in *Kitab fi al-Jadari wa-l-Hasba li-l-Razi*.<sup>92</sup> The accepted English spelling of Beirut is favored over its transliteration, Beyrut. The transliteration of all other place names corresponds to IJMES guidelines. The names of Arabic-language authors whose works have been published in English are not transliterated, but rather correspond to their names' existing appearance in print (for example, Tibawi). The author names for Arabic-language works are transliter-

85 Zaydan studied at the Syrian Protestant College and published numerous literary historical works.

86 John Wortabet's brother authored a notable two-volume monograph on *Syria and the Syrians* (1856). For more on Gregory Wortabet, see appendix II, no. 66.

87 Nimr and Sarruf both taught at the Syrian Protestant College. They published the well-known journal *al-Muqtataf* (The Selected), beginning in 1876. See also chapter I, section 2.5, as well as appendix II, no. 62.

88 An advocate for Protestant cultural influences in Syria, Effendi (who lived in England for a time) described the customs of his homeland in *The Thistle and the Cedar of Lebanon* (1853).

89 In *A Voice from Lebanon, with the Life and Travels of Asaad Y. Kayat* (London, 1847), Kayat reports that when he was twelve years old he learned Italian and English from the missionaries Isaac Bird, William Goodell, and Pliny Fisk: "[Mr. Bird] and his pious and accomplished lady were like parents to me." *Ibid.*, 34–36. For more on Khayat, see appendix II, no. 35.

90 Unless indicated otherwise, all translations from the Arabic are my own.

91 Tarek Abboud's translations are identified with the abbreviation "TA."

92 IJMES Translation & Transliteration Guide, accessed October 2016, [http://ijmes.chass.ncsu.edu/IJMES\\_Translation\\_and\\_Transliteration\\_Guide.htm](http://ijmes.chass.ncsu.edu/IJMES_Translation_and_Transliteration_Guide.htm).

ated (for example, Zaydan). In ABCFM sources, the names of Syrian Protestants are typically anglicized or transliterated in different ways. Thus, the missionaries always wrote Yuhanna Wurtabat as John Wortabet; his mother Sardas was usually Susan. As far as research permits, this study provides a correct transliteration of each Arabic name. Particularly in appendix II, however, incomplete or erroneous names are the consequence of insufficient sources. In the case of John Wortabet, this study retains the English variant because of its widespread use in the secondary literature.

Because this study was completed within the discipline of Protestant theology and is addressed to a broader reading public, Arabic names and the titles of sources and secondary literature are translated and placed in brackets within the text and bibliography to facilitate comprehension.

As mentioned above, the geographic area named in this book's title does not refer to the Syrian Arabic Republic today, but rather to the Ottoman province of Syria. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the geographic name *Suriyya* [Syria] replaced previously used descriptions for the Ottoman administrative territory *Bilād al-Shām*, *Barr al-Shām* or *'Arabistan*. In 1865, the Syrian provinces of Damascus, Aleppo, and Tripoli, which had been divided since the sixteenth century, were reconsolidated as the *wilāyat Suriyya*.<sup>93</sup> The missionaries, too, spoke exclusively of Syria – although their use of the name referred to Biblical<sup>94</sup> or ancient Syria.<sup>95</sup> Over the course of the nineteenth century, the territory that is Lebanon today (where the missionaries were most active) enjoyed an increasing level of administrative autonomy from Istanbul.<sup>96</sup> The Arabs who lived there, however, did not refer to themselves as Lebanese, as some secondary literature wrongly suggests. In the nineteenth century, the concept of Syria became increasingly linked to a concept of national identity. In order to distinguish their region from others in the Ottoman Empire, the persons who lived there identified as “Syrians” (*sūrī*), although the religious background of Christian and Muslim denominations remained a key element of personal identity.<sup>97</sup> This study refers to the intended audience of the American mission as Syrians, corresponding to their own self-identification as Syrian Arabs in the Ottoman Empire.

93 Hitti, *Syria: A Short History*, 214; Rabinovich, “Syria and the Syrian Land,” 43.

94 For example, Matthew 4:24; Luke 2:2; Acts 15:41.

95 Fruma Zachs goes so far as to say that missionaries shaped the concept of Syria. See “Toward a Proto-Nationalist Concept of Syria?”, 147–55. The nationalist movement was, however, much more complex and can be linked to a succession of historical events that were related to the region's growing independence from the Sublime Porte. Such far-reaching influence cannot be attributed to the missionaries alone.

96 ABCFM sources refer consistently to Constantinople; in Arabic, the city was called both *Konstantiniya* and *Istanbul*. Because at that time it had become more common to speak of Istanbul, I use the name here as well.

97 Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*.

## CHAPTER I

### THE MISSION OF THE ABCFM IN THE OTTOMAN PROVINCE OF SYRIA (1819–1870)

By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Levant had become a familiar destination for Protestant and Catholic clerics, who crossed the Mediterranean Sea on the ships of European traders during and after the Crusades. The Western visitors included Dominican and Franciscan monks, Anglican chaplains who settled in Aleppo for almost two hundred years, as well as Jesuits seeking to bolster the weakened presence of Eastern Christians under Ottoman rule in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> When British Levantine trade came to a standstill at the end of the eighteenth century, the chaplains were compelled to leave Aleppo.<sup>2</sup> The French Revolution brought the Jesuits' mission to an end at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> When the Jesuits returned to the Middle East three decades later, they received a new assignment from the region's Catholic patriarch: educating new priests, in order to counteract Protestant efforts at expansion.<sup>4</sup> The first Protestant mission was established in Beirut in 1831, joining others from England<sup>5</sup> and North America that had established a presence in the Arab world in the previous decade.

"The whole mingled population [of western Asia] is in a state of deplorable ignorance and degradation – destitute of the means of divine knowledge,"<sup>6</sup> the Prudential Committee, an advisory body to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), asserted in 1819. The people of western Asia had to be saved, the committee continued. Christians, Jews, Muslims, and "heathens" had to receive the favor of God's grace "by means of preachers, catechists, schoolmas-

1 Murre-van den Berg, introduction to *New Faith in Ancient Lands*, 4–5; Verdeil, "Between Rome and France," 23. The Anglican chaplains were stationed in Aleppo between 1597 and 1782. A recent study by the Australian scholar Andrew Lake recalls that Protestant missionaries were active in the Arab world well before the nineteenth century. See Lake, "The First Protestants in the Middle East," 39–49.

2 *Ibid.*, 47.

3 Murre-van den Berg, introduction to *New Faith in Ancient Lands*, 4–5; Verdeil, "Between Rome and France," 23.

4 Daccache, "Catholic Missions in the Middle East," 698. Thus, the Jesuits' mission focused less on Muslims, and more on strengthening the Uniate churches aligned with Rome against the Protestants. See Verdeil, "Between Rome and France," 30.

5 The Church Missionary Society first worked in Palestine, expanding its mission to Syria in 1860. See Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, 448. The United Presbyterian Church of Scotland likewise maintained a mission station in Aleppo in the second half of the nineteenth century. For more details, see chapter III, section 2.3.

6 MH 15 (1819), in: ROS 1, 6.

ters, and the press.”<sup>7</sup> In 1819, Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons became the first American missionaries in the Levant. They were sent by the ABCFM to lead the people of Holy Land and its surrounding regions to the “true faith,” as well as also to study the area’s geography and culture. American evangelism was directed not only towards Jews and Muslims, but also to “nominal Christians” whose religious knowledge and practices departed significantly from Western Christianity.<sup>8</sup> For the missionaries, fundamental differences in religious teachings and ceremonies (such as the veneration of saints and images, salvation through obedience to the law, and transubstantiation) were unacceptable and in need of correction.<sup>9</sup> The mission’s highest goal was to spread the word of God. Those experiencing with God’s word for the first time – Christians included – could be saved and born again. When Pliny Fisk, Levi Parsons, and their successors set off for the Mediterranean, their motivations were purely religious. Far from desiring to impose secular American culture on the Arabs, they were focused on the end of time. “Disinterested benevolence” and the typically Puritan postmillennial belief that Christ would return after the approaching millennium were the pillars of missionary activity among the “lost souls.”<sup>10</sup> Spiritual reformation alone was insufficient for ushering in the divine providence of the coming kingdom. “Intellectual progress, and great social improvement” were accompanying virtues that characterized the “missionary age,” indicating that the millennium was near.<sup>11</sup> In the “civilizing mission” that had coalesced by the end of the eighteenth century, “upbringing, education [and] culture” were all parts of the missionary message.<sup>12</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that cultural influences from New England found their way into mission work in the Levant in many different ways.

The mission territory initially covered parts of the Ottoman province of Syria from the Mediterranean Sea in the west, to Damascus in the east and Jerusalem in the south. In 1843, Palestine and what is the territory of Syria today were given to other missionary societies, so that the ABCFM could concentrate on areas between Tripoli in the north and Tyre in the south, extending westward from the Mediterranean Sea to Homs, Aleppo, and Damascus.<sup>13</sup> These geographic boundaries nearly correspond to the territory of the Republic of Lebanon today.

Because of political tensions and recurrent outbreaks of the plague, Jerusalem was frequently closed to outsiders in the early nineteenth century, which hindered the establishment of a permanent mission station in the Holy Land.<sup>14</sup> After Levi

7 ABCFM (1835), 6; MH 15 (1819), in: ROS 1, 6.

8 Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, x.

9 Walker, “The American Board and the Oriental Churches,” 217.

10 Theological grounding for the ABCFM came from Samuel Hopkins (1721–1803) and his *System of Doctrines*, which defined sin as self-love. “Disinterested benevolence” was necessary to lead a life without sin. See Hopkins, *System of Doctrines*, 291–97.

11 ABCFM, Missionary Tract, No. 10, 3; Boyer, “Chiliasmus, IV. Nordamerika,” 140.

12 Trepp, “Von der Missionierung der Seelen zur Erforschung der Natur,” 239.

13 Laurie, *Historical Sketch of the Syria Mission*, 3.

14 The missionary society’s renewed attempts to task the missionary Thomson with establishing a station in Jerusalem after 1834 also failed. Bird reported that around twenty missionaries lost their lives in Jerusalem, or had to flee the city. See Bird, *Bible Works in Bible Lands*, 298,

Parsons's early death on February 10, 1819, the American Board realized its plan to establish a presence in the Levant by sending Isaac Bird and William Goodell to Syria in 1823. The mission station that they founded in Beirut was supposed to be a springboard for a further station in Jerusalem, although this was never achieved.<sup>15</sup> In the following years, eighty-four additional missionaries and their wives, female assistants, and doctors served at the Syria Mission. They opened schools for girls and boys, founded boarding schools, educated pastors, and helped to establish institutions of higher learning within Syria.<sup>16</sup>

The Syria Mission did not, however, succeed in winning over many new believers to the Protestant faith. This outcome was shared by the American Board's missions in Armenia, among the Nestorians and Assyrians in present-day Iraq and Iran, among the Jews in Anatolia, and (for a short time) in Palestine and Bulgaria. Few members of the native population wanted to convert or embrace Protestantism publicly.<sup>17</sup> Negative reports could cast doubt on the plausibility of the missionaries' undertaking, but in rare cases, the issue was raised in the *Missionary Herald*, as in the following commentary from 1845:

Our audiences are usually attentive, but we are obliged to lament that we have had no tokens of any special influences of the Spirit. We can report no additions to the number of our communicants, and there seems to reign around us an almost universal spiritual death.<sup>18</sup>

Very soon after the first missionaries arrived in Syria, they were compelled to limit their target audience to the region's Christians. Missionizing Jews, which met with great approval in the United States, proved to be nearly impossible. Efforts to convert Muslims were likewise unsuccessful. The American missionaries came to see that Muslims viewed their own religion as superior to Christianity, a position that was legitimized by the political leadership of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>19</sup> Converting

338–39. Moreover, according to Ottoman law, foreigners were not allowed reside permanently in Jerusalem. See Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 189, 204.

15 Beirut's advantages included its favorable geographic location, good climate, proximity to the mountains for summertime retreat, better maritime connections to Europe, as well as the English protectorate (the United States had not yet established diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire). See MH 20 (1824), in: ROS 1, 220.

16 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 797–98.

17 The mission reports rarely provided precise figures. In 1863, the missionary Bird and his wife estimated that there were around one thousand Protestants in Lebanon. See MH 69 (1863), in: ROS 5, 67–68. Around five or six hundred were associated with the American mission, the rest with other missions. (Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 413). Jessup (*Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 641) reported that there were seven thousand Protestants in 1897. On the lack of precise statistics, Wortabet wrote: "We cannot give the names of converts until they are dead or exiled. And to publish the names of the exiled might bring down wrath upon the heads of their relatives." See his *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 768. Eastern Christians who sympathized with the Protestant faith risked excommunication (for example, MH 23 [1827], in: ROS 1, 469), exclusion from their community (MH 24 [1828], in: ROS 2, 74), prohibition from engaging in trade (MH 24 [1828], in: ROS 2, 23), or even the penalty of death (MH 23 [1827], in: ROS 1, 443).

18 MH 41 (1845), in: ROS 3, 429.

19 Lindsay, *Nineteenth Century American Schools in the Levant*, 78–79.

from Islam to Christianity, moreover, was punishable by death.<sup>20</sup> The missionaries' change in focus was justified by the deplorable condition of Eastern Christianity, which would have to be addressed first before moving on to the Muslims.<sup>21</sup> "As corrupted Christianity had no power to check Mohammedanism at its rise, so it has had no tendency since to terminate it," Eli Smith explained a sermon from around 1833.<sup>22</sup> Christians proved especially receptive to the mission work of Protestants and Jesuits. As members of a religious minority with fewer rights and lesser financial means than Muslims, they hoped that new educational opportunities might provide a path to a better future.<sup>23</sup> The same was true for the Druze, a Muslim minority group that sought to improve its living conditions through contact with the Americans. The missionaries frequently reported on Druzes who were prepared to convert so that they might forego military service or have access to education.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to their first years spent studying Arabic and constructing the mission house in Beirut (along with stations in outlying areas), the missionaries worked enthusiastically to counter the native Christians' ignorance about the Holy Bible. Because the services of the Eastern churches were mostly conducted in older dialects, participants did not understand them. Only a privileged few could read and write,<sup>25</sup> and there were hardly any books. The missionary Henry Harris Jessup later recalled: "Intellectually, the land was in utter stagnation. With the exception of the Koran and its literature among the Moslems, and the ecclesiastical books among the Oriental Christians, there were no books."<sup>26</sup>

A tradition of Arabic book printing did not yet exist. Until the end of the eighteenth century, the Sublime Porte forbade Muslims – although not Christians and other non-Muslim groups<sup>27</sup> – from disseminating printed religious literature in the Arabic language, which was considered holy.<sup>28</sup> Since it cost a great deal of money for a book to be copied by a scribe (*warrāq*), education remained the preserve of a wealthy elite.<sup>29</sup>

The few Christian schools used selections from the Bible, especially the Psalms, as reading books.<sup>30</sup> By the 1820s, more and more people had free access to Biblical

20 Wortabet, *Syria and the Syrians*, vol. 1, 276.

21 Smith, *Missionary Sermons and Addresses*, 62–64.

22 *Ibid.*, 62.

23 Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 66.

24 Van Dyck, "Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission," 6, 14. During the Egyptian occupation (see chapter I, section 2.1), Druzes and Muslims were required to perform military service. See Thomas O'Dea, *The Sociology of Religion* (Prentice-Hall, 1966), 60, cited in Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 93: "Conversion – the acceptance of new religions – is itself closely related to the needs and aspirations which are highly affected by the social circumstances of the people involved."

25 MH 20 (1824), in: ROS 1, 266: "They 'worship they know not what.'"

26 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 27.

27 This is why Jews were able to establish a press in fifteenth-century Constantinople. See Auji, "Between Script and Print," 38.

28 The Turkish language was also subject to this ban. See Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, 127–128. After 1727, secular literature could be printed in Arabic, which reduced religious scholars' dominance over education. See Atiyeh, "The Book in the Modern Arab World," 235.

29 Atiyeh, "The Book in the Modern Arab World," 235.

30 MH 20 (1824), in: ROS 1, 249–50; MH 21 (1825), in: ROS 1, 318.

writings and religious tracts – through public sermons, Bible circles in mission houses, and particularly through Arabic Bibles that were printed on Malta by the British and Foreign Bible Society.<sup>31</sup> These encounters provided early opportunities for dialogue and thoughtful discussion on differing opinions.<sup>32</sup> A next step was the construction of public schools that were open to all religious groups. Muslim Koran schools (*kuṭṭāb* und *madrasa*),<sup>33</sup> as well as the elementary and secondary schools of the different Christian confessions within Syria, were limited in number and could not offer a comprehensive curriculum.<sup>34</sup> American missionaries saw an opportunity.

Their dissemination of reading materials and first successes in the field of education incited strong reactions from the spiritual heads of the local religious communities.<sup>35</sup> If they had at first welcomed the missionaries, without foreseeing the missionaries' intent, they were later appalled by the public denigration of other religions in word as well as deed.<sup>36</sup> Christians, in particular, saw the work of the "*Biblishiyyūn*,"<sup>37</sup> or "Bible men,"<sup>38</sup> as a danger to their faith communities. In response, missionaries like Eli Smith and William Goodell pled for more respectful

31 "Annals of the Syria Mission," in: ROS 5, 259.

32 Smith, *Missionary Sermons and Addresses*, 162–63.

33 Muslim *kuṭṭāb* and *maktab* schools were elementary schools located particularly in villages and small towns. *Madrasa* schools provided a next educational step and were usually located in big cities. See Diab/Wählin, "The Geography of Education in Syria in 1882," 108–9. Smith complained that the curriculum of these schools "was almost entirely limited to their religion, and made them disparage every other species of knowledge, and every source of information not Mohammedan. . . . They even cared not to know any thing of foreign nations; an almost entire ignorance of the *geography* of Europe was universal." See Smith, *Missionary Sermons and Addresses*, 24. The *kuṭṭāb* schools were intended for children of the lower classes, while well-to-do Muslims hired private tutors for their children. Education was the domain of families or the religious community. See Cioeta, "Islamic Benevolent Societies and Public Education in Ottoman Syria," 40–41.

34 Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, 125. Of the Maronite schools, only the 'Ayn Warqa and 'Ayn Traz seminaries remained open at the end of the eighteenth century. Many boarding schools were established under Egyptian administration after 1832, but these were purely military institutions led by army officers. See Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 68.

35 The *Missionary Herald* thoroughly documented all kinds of animosities throughout the years. In 1826, for example, the Maronite patriarch issued a proclamation against the writings of the missionaries (see MH 23 [1827], in ROS 1, 480–82): "We heard of the arts and the blasphemous innovations of these deceivers, by which they degrade the Christian faith, and bring ruin to the Catholic religion and to the souls of men." (Ibid., 481). The Rum Orthodox church warned its members not to attend the mission schools or to converse with the Americans. See MH 24 (1828), in: ROS 2, 9.

36 Makdisi (*Faith Misplaced*, 30) mentions a rule that was more or less respected by all religious communities: "Do not openly blaspheme or insult other people's religions."

37 Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 39. The term likely derives from the word "Biblicist" (see "Biblici" in MH 27 [1831], in: ROS 1, 287). It was used particularly by Arab Catholics in polemical speeches and writings.

38 As one of many examples, see MH 21 (1825), in: ROS 1, 305. Syrians later adopted "Biblemen," a translation of "*Biblishiyyūn*," as a general designation for the missionaries, without pejorative connotations.

engagement, without provocation:<sup>39</sup> “Instead of despising the national customs of the people and endeavoring to change them – in things morally indifferent, we treat them with due regard, and have respect to them in our conduct.”<sup>40</sup>

In addition, the missionaries began to see themselves as mediators between religious communities that were often at odds with one another, and they sought to ease hostilities through the Protestant faith: “But the task is, to fuse into one harmonious, evangelical church, these diverse and intensely antagonistic elements; to draw them into fraternal and confiding unity.”<sup>41</sup> American efforts at diplomacy, sometimes leading to attempts at reconciliation between two quarreling religious parties, no doubt improved their standing among their opponents.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, the anti-Muslim and anti-Catholic polemics in American missionary sermons, tracts, and station reports also pitted the local religious communities against one another. Anyone who followed the Americans would have encountered these views all the time, internalizing them at least in part.<sup>43</sup>

As the decades passed, the missionaries faced fewer confrontations with the religious communities. The Protestants’ political recognition as a religious community (*millet*) within the Ottoman Empire in 1850 played an important role.<sup>44</sup> As a millet, Protestants stood under the protection of the sultan, possessed greater rights, and enjoyed the same recognition as other religious communities.

For more than half a century, American missionaries sought to “civilize” and bring Christianity to the Middle East, with American society as their model.<sup>45</sup> The

39 “We are determined not to call them forth into opposition by a proselyting and controversial course.” See MH 26 (1830), in: ROS 2, 205. The intent was to communicate correct information, so that the “enlightened” natives could discuss controversies by themselves, without being prodded by the Americans. See William Goodell in MH 26 (1830), in: ROS 2, 183–84. Badr (“Mission to ‘Nominal Christians,’” 99) writes that Goodell, unlike Jonas King, did not publicly attack the teachings of other churches: “Goodell himself was a patient and domestic man.” More on this in chapter II, section 1.2.

40 This was the first point of a resolution made after a general meeting of the different mission stations in the Mediterranean region, led by Eli Smith over several days in 1836. See “Records of the Syrian Mission” (April 22, 1836, afternoon): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1., 11.

41 Dennis, *A Sketch of the Syria Mission*, 5; MH 20 (1824), in: ROS 1, 268: “preaching ‘the Gospel of peace’ to these men of cruelty and blood.” McGilvary emphasized that in the mission schools, students of different confessions could come together on a basis of tolerance and trust, although this had little influence on the country’s political unrest. See *Story of Our Syria Mission*, 19.

42 In 1843, leaders of hostile groups even sought the missionaries’ advice and used the mission house as a site for talks with their opponents. See MH 39 (1843), in: ROS 3, 367.

43 Khalaf (*Cultural Resistance*, 124) goes so far as to say that “in doing so, they contributed, willfully or otherwise, to sectarian discord.” This view presumes that the Americans exercised great influence on Syrian society, which I do not believe to be the case.

44 Already in 1835, the missionaries hoped that the American consuls in Beirut and Jerusalem could facilitate the granting of *millet* status. See Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 76–77, 109. Each *millet* was administered by its respective religious leader (*wakīl*), who had legal authority over marriage, divorce, inheritance, and other personal matters. See Yazigi, “American Presbyterian Mission Schools in Lebanon,” 13.

45 On Christianizing and “civilizing” (with respect to Native Americans), see the American Board’s annual report from 1816 in: ABCFM, First Ten Annual Reports, 135.

ABCFM, however, increasingly urged that preaching should take precedence over civilizing initiatives. The American Board's position was informed in part by the apparent failure of conversion work,<sup>46</sup> but also by local Christian churches' increasing awareness of Holy Scripture, which was being read and preached more frequently by popular demand.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, a declining interest in missions and the circumstances of the American Civil War (1861–1865) led to dwindling donations from American home churches and philanthropists. Without these donations, the financing of foreign missions would no longer be possible.<sup>48</sup> Drastic budget cuts particularly affected the educational infrastructure that the missionaries had erected. In 1870, the American Board was compelled to hand over administration of the Syria Mission to the Presbyterian Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (PBCFM).<sup>49</sup>

The first section of this chapter asks whether the history of the Syria Mission can be considered a success. Accomplishments such as the mission press, mission schools, institutions of higher education, and the establishment of numerous native congregations speak for themselves. The low number of converts, however, became a focal point of disappointed hopes and differences of opinion. The discrepancy between theory and practice shows that the mission strategy promoted by the ABCFM seldom worked out as planned. Some of the Syria Mission's projects, like Arabic book printing, developed an unintended dynamic of their own – an outcome that can be fully understood only within the greater political and cultural context of nineteenth-century Syria, which is portrayed in the second section of this chapter. From the middle of the nineteenth century on, Beirut became an arena for the competing interests of the great powers. Great Britain acted on behalf of the Druzes, France on behalf of the Eastern Catholic churches in full communion with Rome, while Russia supported Orthodox Christianity. The complex reasons for the city's openness to foreign influences will be examined in detail. Finally, this chapter provides an overview of political events, explaining how educational and cultural initiatives eventually departed from missionary evangelism. Without the reinforcing

46 The ABCFM nonetheless summarized in 1882: "It was never contemplated that the missionary work should be continued in the empire till the great body of the people were evangelized." See ABCFM, Annual Report 1882, "Memorandum for Missions in the Turkish Empire and Recommendations," lxvi–lxxv, cited in: Walker, "The American Board and the Oriental Churches," 221.

47 "Report of Hasbeiyia Station for the year 1852": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (165): (Sidon) "The Greek Catholic bishop is not only compelled to preach, but also to preach from the Gospel in order to quiet the new demands of his people." The mission's new Arabic translation of the Bible was also used by Orthodox churches in Syria (see chapter II, sections 2.3).

48 Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East*, 23; Sharkey, *American Missionaries and the Middle East*, xii: "Not only did American churchgoers have the 'cash surpluses' that enabled them to donate to missions, but they had no embarrassment about fundraising – and even about 'conspicuous financing' – when Christian causes were at stake."

49 Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, viif: Missions that continued to be administered by the ABCFM after 1870 were located among the Armenian, Greek, Bulgarian, Muslim, and Arabic-speaking Christian populations in eastern Turkey. By the end of the nineteenth century, the number of mission workers in Syria had not grown larger under the Presbyterian Board's leadership. This board faced the same kinds of financial difficulties as the ABCFM. See Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 277.

influence of cultural developments in Syria, the educational accomplishments of the Syria Mission would have been wholly ineffective due to insufficient finances.

## I.1. THE AMERICAN SYRIA MISSION: A SUCCESS STORY?

### 1. The American Mission Press in Beirut

Americans' interest in literature printed in Arabic began with the work of their missionaries in the Levant.<sup>50</sup> The first nineteenth-century attempts to print Arabic letters in American books lagged far behind what the missionaries accomplished within just one decade in Syria. As was immediately clear to participants of the ABCFM missionaries' conference on Malta in 1829,<sup>51</sup> large quantities of schoolbooks were needed in order to establish a solid basis for instruction. A sufficient number of schoolbooks – at least those meeting the missionaries' demands – did not exist in Syria at this time. Since 1822 the ABCFM operated a press on Malta, a strategically located and politically secure Mediterranean hub. It provided all of the region's missions with printed material in English, Modern Greek, Greek-Turkish, as well as Armenian-Turkish.<sup>52</sup> In 1829, the Americans acquired an Arabic typeface from London, but for various reasons it was not used in Beirut until seven years later.<sup>53</sup> In the interim, they taught from religious tracts,<sup>54</sup> Bibles, and schoolbooks in Arabic, Greek, and Italian,<sup>55</sup> using materials from the Church Missionary Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, as well as the London Missionary Society on Malta.<sup>56</sup> The Bible societies' inexpensive materials, printed in various languages, were intended to facilitate the speedy dissemination of their messages.<sup>57</sup>

50 Krek, "Some Observations on Printing Arabic in America and by Americans Abroad."

51 Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 73: One of the resolutions from Malta concerned the production of books for the mission schools.

52 Anderson (*History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 74) also mentions Arabic. According to current research, however, the Arabic typeface was not used before 1836. See Krek, "Some Observations on Printing Arabic in America and by Americans Abroad," 81. More on this in chapter II, section 1.3.

53 The typeface arrived much later than promised, and then there was no available printing press that could handle the Arabic language. In addition, there was no Arabic translation that was ready to go to press in 1829. See Roper, "The Beginnings of Arabic Printing by the ABCFM," 53–55, 57.

54 Condemnations of the Eastern churches' religious practices, as well as of the Catholic church and its missionaries, were plentiful in the religious literature of the Protestant mission presses. More in Murre-van den Berg, "Simply by giving to them macaroni ...", 63–80.

55 In the first half of the nineteenth century, Italian was the lingua franca throughout the eastern Mediterranean. The missionaries, too, sometimes taught in Italian. English and French were added later. See Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, 426; Lindsay, *Nineteenth Century American Schools in the Levant*, 94.

56 Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 80; Glaß and Roper, "Arabischer Buch- und Zeitungsdruck," 190–91.

57 Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 83.

In 1833, the work of the American press on Malta was divided between Smyrna and Beirut. Beginning in 1834, Beirut's focus was to be on Arabic book printing. Eli Smith officially assumed the directorship here in 1837.<sup>58</sup> It took several years, however, before printing in Beirut really took off.<sup>59</sup> To begin, there was a shortage of translators who could translate the materials into Arabic. Then the defective typeface from London had to be discarded and a satisfactory replacement developed.<sup>60</sup> The American Mission Press (*Matba'at al-Amrikan*)<sup>61</sup> in Beirut contributed to the mission's outstanding reputation beyond the borders of Syria.<sup>62</sup> Not only religious materials were printed in Beirut, but also secular literature – a first in Syria! After the Mission Press opened in 1836, its first published work was an Arabic grammar book by the scholar Nasif al-Yaziji,<sup>63</sup> who worked for the mission for many years.<sup>64</sup>

In 1834, Smith was convinced that printing schoolbooks could become the main business of press. The only reading book for children in Syria that the missionaries could find was a compilation of excerpts from the Book of Psalms. Arithmetic, geography, and history books did not exist.<sup>65</sup> Eli Smith wanted to produce books in Arabic<sup>66</sup> that resembled standard works in Europe and the United States: “With the means of transferring into Arabic the latest and best improvements of our

58 The press in Smyrna already began operation in December 1833. See Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 76.

59 As late as 1846, Van Dyck wrote: “The Press up to this time had done little comparatively ... the books usefull were printed in Malta.” (“Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission from 1839–1850,” 22)

60 Roper, “The Beginnings of Arabic Printing by the ABCFM,” 57. On the reasons why the typeface from London could not be used, see chapter II, section 1.3.

61 Glaß, *Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut Again*, 14.

62 “Printing Establishment”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1 (62): “The issues from our press are called for and highly prized in India, Egypt, and Constantinople, and we confidently expect that as missions multiply among the millions speaking the Arabic language, the demand for them, as well as their usefulness, will more and more increase.”

In her 2013 dissertation, the art historian Hala Auji offers an interesting perspective on the publications of the American Mission Press between 1834 and 1860. She concludes that the presentation of the first printed works (until the middle of the 1840s) was strongly oriented towards the calligraphic traditions of Arabic manuscripts, in order to win over the Arabic-speaking reading public. Only later did the calligraphic layouts give way to simpler printing designs that were oriented towards Western models.

63 *Kitab Fasl al-Khitab fi Usul Lughat al-A'rab* (Treatise on the Foundations of the Arabic Language). More on Nasif al-Yaziji in appendix II, no. 75.

64 According to Glaß and Roper, this was the first secular Arabic book printed in Lebanon. (“Arabischer Buch- und Zeitungsdruck, Teil I,” 190–91) Following one thousand copies of the grammar book, Arabic translations of the hymnal (two hundred copies), the catechism by Isaac Watts (one thousand copies), and *The Dairy Man's Daughter* by Legh Richmond (one thousand copies) were published in 1836. (ABCFM, Annual Report 1837, 61, cited in: Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 82)

65 “On the Preparation of School-Books for Greeks, Armenians, & Arabs, drawn up by Mr. Smith” (Malta, October 8, 1829): ABC 16.6.3., Vol. 3: According to Smith, history was not a subject of instruction in Syria. The people preferred to tell fictional stories, which frequently contained elements of historical truth.

66 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, February 4, 1834): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 01 (74).

own country in school-books, we might hope to give our schools a superiority in efficiency, that would acquire them favor in the eyes of all the people.”<sup>67</sup>

He soon came to recognize, however, that translations of Christian novels and reading books that were beloved in England and the United States did not always appeal to the Arabs: “Our modes of expression are foreign, our ideas and manner of reasoning are not suited to the apprehension of the people . . .”<sup>68</sup> Smith developed new plans, hoping for financial support from the American Tract Society:

We have therefore determined so far as we may be enabled to write books and tracts ourselves suited to their taste of mind. These will probably be the works which we shall value most, and when we have enough of them prepared, they will constitute a large part of what we shall need your society to help us in printing.<sup>69</sup>

The missionaries were hardly in the position to meet these expectations, however, since the shortage of good books remained, and readership was growing steadily. Textbooks were rarely complete translations of Western works, but rather compilations from a variety of sources, both Western and Arabic, on a single subject. The literature that was used for these elaborate book compositions, however, is mostly unknown.

Although the American Board initially hoped to produce schoolbooks that might be adopted even beyond Syria’s borders,<sup>70</sup> things changed in the years and decades to come. Directives from Boston frequently restricted the printing of anything other than purely religious literature<sup>71</sup>, and sometimes halted operations altogether (see below). From the very beginning, there was not a sufficient number of workers, and they were not always compensated by the Board. After Rufus Anderson visited the Levant in 1843/44, he reported that the press was a distraction from the work of conversion.<sup>72</sup> According to Anderson, the missionaries in Syria did not understand that “the press should be kept strictly subservient to the pulpit.”<sup>73</sup>

The lack of support for the American Mission Press in Syria was not, however, an exceptional case. At first, presses were a part of many ABCFM missions. Book printing raised the odds of doing good “in an incalculable ration,” as stated in the 1821 annual report of the ABCFM.<sup>74</sup> The voice of a missionary could be heard by only a few, “but tracts and books reach thousands.”<sup>75</sup> Before long, however, the ABCFM

67 Ibid.

68 Smith to Hallock (New York, April 17, 1840): ABC 60 (105), (HHL).

69 Ibid.

70 Anderson to Smith (Boston, January 19, 1830): ABC 16.8.1. Vol. 8.

71 Auji, “Between Script and Print,” 120.

72 Anderson, *Report to the Prudential Committee*, 29; Anderson to the Syria Mission (October 22, 1842): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8: “If it be so that your books (other than the Scriptures) extend the rage of exasperation beyond the controlling influence of your personal intercourse and living voice, – and especially if the preparation of books & the superintendence of the press take up time, wh. ought to be devoted to oral instruction, – make less a time of the press.” (Underlining in quoted correspondence is always the emphasis of the original author.)

73 Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 263:

74 ABCFM, Annual Report 1821, 201, cited in: Coakley, “Printing Offices of the American Board,” 5.

75 Ibid.

changed its mind, for the following reasons. First, the distribution of religious literature and Bible tracts did not prove particularly effective. Second, the presses and their workers needed financial support, which book sales alone could not cover. The mission presses were running at capacity to meet the high demand for works that did not contribute to the goal of the mission.<sup>76</sup> In the second half of the nineteenth century, the ABCFM shifted its position on the field of education (see below) and printing in many foreign missions. In 1861, Anderson reported that fifteen presses had been closed or sold to local entrepreneurs – including in Smyrna (1853), Bombay (1858), and Manepy/Ceylon (1854/55).<sup>77</sup> In Beirut, work stopped between 1839 and 1841 because of a shortage of workers and a missing typeface, and between 1844 and 1845 because of a directive from Anderson, although printing later resumed.<sup>78</sup>

In light of these restrictions, the work that the American Mission Press could eventually accomplish is impressive. In 1853, for example, 5,008 books and tracts were published. More than four thousand of these were sent to mission stations in Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and even India.<sup>79</sup> This mission also kept a supply of books from the missionary presses of Malta, Cairo, and Constantinople, so that these books could be shipped from Beirut.<sup>80</sup> Not every work that the press produced was financed by the American mission. Religious literature, in particular, was supported by the London Religious Tract Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society.<sup>81</sup> From the 1860s on, printing was financed almost entirely by foreign Bible societies, and not the ABCFM.<sup>82</sup> Numerous Syrian authors, supported by local businessmen or intellectual associations, could rent the press to print their own works – an additional source of income for the financially strapped American Mission Press.<sup>83</sup> The American Mission Press could not underwrite the printing of textbooks for the Syrian Protestant College, founded in 1866, because it was not authorized to do so. At first, Cornelius Van Dyck, John Wortabet, and others had to pay for textbook printing themselves.<sup>84</sup> In 1869, the SPC Board of Trustees established the Theodore Publication Fund in order to cover the costs of books for the college.<sup>85</sup> The Americans shared the production of textbooks with other local presses.<sup>86</sup>

76 Ibid.

77 Ebd. 6, 14–21. In 1843, Anderson spoke of seventeen presses in the foreign missions: Rufus Anderson to John Pickering (June 16, 1843): ABC 1.1., Vol. 18, 130 (HHL).

78 MH 38 (1842), in: ROS 3, 338; Anderson, *Report to the Prudential Committee*, 29.

79 “Report of Beirut Station for the year 1853” (Beirut, January 1854): ABC 16.8.1. Vol. 4.1 (152), 9.

80 Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 148.

81 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, December 31, 1842): ABC 16.8.1, Vol. 1 (159); Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 250.

82 Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, January 25, 1868): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (515).

83 Auji, “Between Script and Print,” 129.

84 See C. Van Dyck, *Usul al-Kimiya* (Fundamentals of Chemistry); J. Wortabet, *Al-Taudih fi Usul al-Tashrih* (Clarification of the Fundamentals of Anatomy); Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 185. More in appendix I.

85 SPC annual report (June 1869): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 8; Penrose, “*That they may have life*,” 33.

86 Tibawi, “Some Misconceptions about the Nahda,” 16.

Despite the special position held by the American Mission Press in Beirut from the mid-nineteenth century, it was not the first press in Syria. In 1830 there were around six presses in Syria and Palestine, most of which were located in Christian monasteries. They were able to print excerpts from the Bible, as well as liturgical writings in Arabic and other church dialects.<sup>87</sup> Once the Americans established their mission press in Beirut, it was only a few years before the Jesuits did the same, in 1848. The American Mission Press also became a model for newly established native presses.<sup>88</sup> These included the *al-Matba‘a as-Suriyya* (The Syrian Press, 1857/58), which published the Arabic journal *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* (Garden of News), as well as the *al-Matba‘a al-‘Umumiyya* (The Public Press) and the *Matba‘at al-Ma‘arif* (Press of Knowledge), which was established by Butrus al-Bustani and Khalil Sarkis in 1867. In 1876, Khalil Sarkis established the *al-Matba‘a al-Adabiyya* (Press for Literature), and in 1874, ‘Abdul-Qadir Qabbani founded the *Matba‘at Jam‘iyat al-Funun* (Press for the Society of the Arts).<sup>89</sup>

The American Mission Press in Syria was probably the first press anywhere to publish a complete literary work in Arabic.<sup>90</sup> Its commercial work was likewise pioneering. As described above, the press – independent of the mission – also accepted commissions from scholars, businessmen, and politicians. Nonetheless, the press concentrated primarily on the production of religious texts, both before and after the death of its director Eli Smith in 1857. It would be false to assert that the American Mission Press was first to promote the rediscovery of classical Arabic literature.<sup>91</sup> In its first decades, the press exclusively produced works of religion and non-fiction; classical works came later.<sup>92</sup>

Translation of the Bible into Arabic was one of the Syria Mission’s most important undertakings; the project kept the American Mission Press afloat and jus-

87 Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 230; Atiyeh, “The Book in the Modern Arab World,” 236–37: The first printed psalmbook was produced in the Maronite monastery of St. Anthony in Qozhaya, in Mount Lebanon, in 1610. The book, which was printed in Garshuni (Arabic in Syriac script), remained an exception until the middle of the eighteenth century. At another monastery in Shweir, in the mountains east of Beirut, an Arabic printing press with movable type was set up in 1723, encouraging Maronite Christians to replace the Syriac language of their liturgy with Arabic.

88 Smith provided some of them with material support and advice. See chapter II, section 1.3.

89 Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 166. On the adoption of the American typeface by some of these presses, see chapter II, section 1.3. In 1853, the Jesuits established their *Imprimerie Catholique* in Beirut. (Hitti, *Syria: A Short History*, 230) By the end of the nineteenth century, there were more than twenty printing presses – in addition to the Protestant and Catholic presses – in Beirut and the territory of Lebanon. See Atiyeh, “The Book in the Modern Arab World,” 240.

90 Krek, “Some Observations on Printing Arabic in America and by Americans abroad,” 85: It is unclear whether the American mission press in Singapore, which printed in Malaysian with Arabic letters, was printing separately in Arabic by 1835. According to Krek, the available evidence does not indicate whether Beirut or Singapore was first.

91 Tibawi emphasizes that renown for publishing classical Arabic literature “must be shared between native scholars in Egypt and European orientalists,” not by the Americans. (“Some Misconceptions about the Nahda,” 15)

92 Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 252–53.

tified its existence to the ABCFM.<sup>93</sup> Given the meticulous dedication that Smith and Van Dyck brought to their study of the Arabic language, they seemed predestined to work on a new translation of the Bible. In 1813, a missionary in India had approached the American Board with similar zeal.<sup>94</sup> While translating, Smith received support from Butrus al-Bustani and the grammar teacher Nasif al-Yaziji. After 1857, Van Dyck was assisted by the Muslim scholar Yusuf al-Asir. Publication of the so-called “Van Dyck Bible” in 1865 burnished the American mission’s reputation among Arabic speakers well beyond the borders of Syria, all the way to Egypt and Europe.<sup>95</sup> This success should not, however, distract from the highs and lows that accompanied the mission press.<sup>96</sup> Many missionaries did not want to give up the press and lobbied for its continued existence. Cornelius Van Dyck, who managed the press from 1857 until the early 1870s, wrote in 1868 to the ABCFM’s new corresponding secretary, Nathaniel G. Clark, that the mission press was not able to meet the great demand for printed literature:

Where is the Christian literature for the Arab race to come from? We can prepare books, and are preparing them, but how are they to be published? In the meantime a frivolous, semi-infidel, or infidel, cheap literature is springing up from little native presses, and we are doing next to nothing to meet the actual pressing demand for reading. We are educating minds and giving them no food. Never was the call for books, good books, of all kinds, so urgent.<sup>97</sup>

## 2. The mission schools

When Eli Smith reached Beirut in 1827, he noted that there were already fourteen mission schools, with a total of 700 to 800 students.<sup>98</sup> Statistics from the year 1836, however, point to ten schools with 385 children, suggesting that his estimation was inflated – a reminder that numbers and statistics should be viewed with caution in this historical context.<sup>99</sup> There is no doubt that the American mission schools ex-

93 See also chapter II, sections 1.4 and 2.3.

94 Samuel Newell to the ABCFM (Ceylon, December 20, 1813), in: ABCFM, *First Ten Annual Reports*, 111. The Anglican missionary Henry Martyn (1781–1812) also wrote that millions of people could be reached with an Arabic Bible. See Leavy, “The Making of a Missionary,” 33. Already in the year 750, there was supposed to have been an Arabic Bible for Arab Christians. The Arabic Bible that had been translated by Jesuits in 1671 was still in use in the nineteenth century, including by the American missionaries, before they undertook their own translation. See Kahle, *Die Arabischen Bibelübersetzungen*, iii-iv. More in chapter II, section 1.4.

95 Goodsell, *You Shall Be My Witness*, 26.

96 As early as 1860, there was discussion of selling the press to a private entrepreneur, since it had reached its maximum capacity under the missionaries. A private businessman assumed management of printing operations at the end of the nineteenth century, but ownership remained with the mission. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 315. Both the American and Jesuit presses remained active through the 1960s. See Hitti, *Syria: A Short History*, 230.

97 Van Dyck to N. G. Clark (Beirut, January 25, 1868): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (515).

98 Smith, *Missionary Sermons and Addresses*, 166.

99 Laurie, *Historical Sketch of the Syria Mission*, 18. In his comprehensive study *American Interests in Syria* (1966), Tibawi discusses the frequent disparities in the number of schools and students that appear in the different sources of the missionary society.

perienced rapid growth, which also caused some problems. The schools attracted many attendees from different denominations, resulting in shortages of money, teachers, and especially materials. Over many years, the missionaries' reports read like a back and forth of school foundings and closings. Mission schools at this time were instruments of literacy; boys – and later girls, too – had to learn to read and write so that they could understand the words of the Bible by themselves. In addition, the ABCFM hoped that overseas schools would educate future teachers and preachers who would be able to assist the missionaries in their work.<sup>100</sup>

In April 1824, Isaac Bird and William Goodell opened a small mission school in their own house, where they instructed six children in the alphabet each day. Once the students were sufficiently advanced, the Americans hired the Syrian Tannus al-Haddad as a teacher. On July 28, 1824, the first American school opened in an outlying district of Beirut, with seven students and a native teacher.<sup>101</sup> The school quickly became popular, and by September its attendance had risen to between fifty and sixty students.<sup>102</sup> In 1824, Isaac Bird wrote in the *Missionary Herald* that “a thing so novel here as a free school established by strangers, could not fail to attract considerable notice.”<sup>103</sup> What made the mission school so unique was its attendance by students from all of the region's different religious groups, although the Americans had not broken new ground merely by founding a school here. In contrast to other parts of the world, missionaries in Syria encountered a literary culture that was centuries old. There were already numerous schools, but education in Syria was not accessible to all children, nor did it enjoy the same distinguished status within society as in the United States. In 1831, the missionaries Bird and Whiting confirmed that “there is . . . a distressing apathy on the subject of education, among all classes of the people.”<sup>104</sup> The existing Orthodox Christian schools and Muslim madrasas served only their own religious communities.<sup>105</sup> There were no state-sponsored schools at this time, and education was reserved for only a certain stratum. By providing access to education for all, the Syria Mission saw its opportunity for using schools to spread its religious messages.

These children were running about the streets in all sorts of mischief; and almost as ignorant as the beasts of the field. No one cared for them. Now these people have come from a far country to teach them what will make them happy and useful.<sup>106</sup>

100 Anderson, “Missionary Schools,” 109: “The rule is this; – That the system of education, in all its parts, so far as it is supported by the funds of the mission, should have a direct reference to the training up of native teachers and preachers.”

101 Bird and Goodell to Jeremiah Evarts (Beirut, January 11, 1825): ABC 16.6., Vol. 2. The mission house was initially located outside of Beirut, moving into the city in the fall of 1824.

102 MH 21 (1825), in: ROS 1, 317. By 1825 there were eighty or ninety students, including two girls. The students' ages were between five and fifteen years old. See MH 21 (December 1825), 379. Unless indicated otherwise, these and following references come from original editions of the *Missionary Herald*.

103 MH 21 (1825), in: ROS 1, 317.

104 MH 27 (1831), in: ROS 2, 292.

105 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 27.

106 As portrayed by the native teacher Tannus al-Haddad in MH 21 (1825), in: ROS 1, 318.

The mission schools at that time could not be characterized as traditional schools, in no small part because of the lack of suitable teachers.<sup>107</sup> In two to three hours of instruction, there was just enough time for reading exercises (excerpts from the Bible in Arabic, Italian, or English), followed by explanations of religious teachings.<sup>108</sup> Improvements came gradually. Fixed school hours were set in order to discourage students' erratic arrival times. Students were divided into classes, and the minimum school age was set at four years old. The missionaries introduced a grading system, and also the practice of studying silently, which they saw as a particularly important reform, "it being a universal practice for all in a school to study aloud together, almost deafening their neighbors, to say nothing of their teacher and themselves."<sup>109</sup>

Despite the growing diversity of subjects taught, Anderson argued that preaching must take precedence. Other subjects helped merely to facilitate students' comprehension of the Bible, Anderson wrote in his essay on missionary schools.<sup>110</sup> Outside observers should by no means receive the impression, as had often occurred in the past, "that modern missionaries among the heathen give too much attention to schools."<sup>111</sup> There was a connection, however, between the schools' appeal and the missionaries' restraint in compelling students – first boys, then girls as well (see below) – to take on a new faith. Some missionaries appeared to believe that the act of founding schools alone fulfilled a mission. Working among the Muslims and Eastern Christians proved difficult, and the missionaries' efforts at reform<sup>112</sup> rarely succeeded.<sup>113</sup>

Because the first mission school was so well attended, the Americans believed that more schools were essential. Schools could be used "to form habits of industry, and order, and domestic virtue in [the] pupils," as Anderson had once instructed the first missionaries Goodell and Bird.<sup>114</sup> By one count, there were thirty-three schools with around one thousand male and female students in 1859.<sup>115</sup> Not only children attended the schools. Particularly in more remote areas, adults, and even the el-

107 Lindsay, *Nineteenth Century American Schools in the Levant*, 89; Khalaf, *Cultural Resistance*, 172: Providing accommodations for orphans or the children of household employees could not yet be considered a proper school. However, Reeves-Ellington writes that most mission schools were initially "home schools that trained domestic help and taught basic literacy." (*Domestic Frontiers*, 33)

108 MH 30 (1834), in: ROS 2, 391. Thus, the schools initially differed little from the aforementioned *kuttāb* schools for Muslim children, with the exception of their better facilities and free tuition. See Cioeta, "Islamic Benevolent Societies and Public Education in Ottoman Syria," 42.

109 MH 32 (1836), in ROS 3, 8. For the missionaries, disciplining the Arab children was an important aspect of civilizing the population. See also Smith's report on the new mission school in Hasbeiya (MH 41 [1845], in: ROS 3, 411): "From being as wild as Arab colts, they soon became quiet in conduct, abstaining from disorderly sports, and sometimes even reproving their elders for rudeness in speech and behavior."

110 Anderson, "Missionary Schools," 104, 107–8.

111 *Ibid.*, 87.

112 On reforming the Eastern and Catholic churches of the Middle East, see section 1.3 in this chapter.

113 Yazigi, "American Presbyterian Mission Schools in Lebanon," 17–18.

114 Cited in Harris, *Nothing but Christ*, 11.

115 Laurie, *Historical Sketch of the Syria Mission*, 18.

derly, participated in instruction so that they could learn to read and write.<sup>116</sup> In light of the missionaries' high expectations for their schools, in 1860 John Wortabet warned that circumstances were not the same as in Europe or America. European and American children grew up in an environment shaped by Protestantism, which was not the case in Syria. The mission schools' influence was limited, since students often received conflicting moral instruction at home. Elementary education was important, "though to look for the results which are so different, would be to expect too much, and therefore to meet with disappointment."<sup>117</sup>

Despite their limited success in using schools to attract new believers, the Americans did not hesitate to take up a new educational cause: teaching girls in Syria to read and write. Disturbed by the lack of regard for women in Arab society, the missionaries worked to dispel prejudices that women were intellectually inferior to men.<sup>118</sup> Their promotion of women's education was not, however, a selfless act on behalf of social justice in Syria. The conversion of Syrians required winning Syrian girls and women, too, for the Protestant faith. In the United States, the ideal of the "Republican Mother" encouraged the education of women on the grounds that they were responsible for raising future generations:<sup>119</sup> "If properly educated in solid Protestant values, they would be instruments of socialization and the potential founders of homes established on Christian virtues and principles."<sup>120</sup>

The first mission school to teach girls – although it was not the first girls' school in Syria<sup>121</sup> – was likely founded by Isaac Bird and William Goodell in Beirut in 1824.<sup>122</sup> Eliza Thomson and Martha Dodge established a girls' school in Beirut in 1834,<sup>123</sup> which was later expanded by the missionary wife Sarah L. Smith. Initially met with suspicion, the school came to enjoy a positive reputation within the

116 "Report of the Hasbeiyan Station for 1851": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (164).

117 Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 385–86.

118 MH 20 (1824), in: ROS 1, 244. As stated by a Greek Catholic priest: "It is better for them to remain in ignorance, than to know how to read and write. They are quite bad enough with what little they now know. Teach them to read and write, and there would be no living with them." See also MH 23 (1827), in: ROS 1, 391. Dennis, *A Sketch of the Syria Mission*, 24: "It was argued that to teach her would tend to the disruption of society, to the disorganization of society, to the unsexing of women." See also Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 27: "The first missionaries could not hear of a woman or girl in the land who could read."

119 Klaiber, "Women's Roles in American Society," 308.

120 Fleischmann, "Evangelization or Education," 268; Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 24. Of course, the American ideal for women at this time hardly promoted their individual freedom. Scholz correctly notes that women did not have the right to vote, and that their duties were limited to the institution of the family, divinely sanctioned as the foundation of society. (*Foreign Education and Indigenous Reaction*, 239)

121 Lindner, "Rahil 'Ata al-Bustani," 51 (note 26): Catholic nuns had educated girls in this region since the seventeenth century.

122 Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 32: Without providing a source, Tibawi writes about an apparently mixed class of six boys and girls. In 1826, Goodell mentioned only one female student. See MH 22 (1826), in: ROS 1, 380.

123 Lindner, "Making a Way into the Heart of the People," 83.

community.<sup>124</sup> A boys' boarding school was founded in Beirut on December 13, 1835. Upon the suggestion of Rufus Anderson, it became a theological seminary.<sup>125</sup> The boys received English-language instruction from Eli Smith in geography, astronomy, and languages.<sup>126</sup> The instructional offerings at the girls' schools were initially limited to reading, knitting, sewing, and cooking, with Arabic, arithmetic, geography, and history added later.<sup>127</sup> In 1846, Henry De Forest and his wife founded a girls' boarding school in Beirut "to train up these girls to be industrious and neat housewives, not learned but not ignorant women, sensible, practical characters."<sup>128</sup> The lesser social prestige of women's education made it difficult for the girls' schools to retain Syrian teachers. At first, therefore, these teachers were often paid twice as much as their boys' schools counterparts.<sup>129</sup>

Insofar as the availability of materials and qualified teachers allowed, after 1836 the Americans sought to introduce a distinctively American model of schooling to the region. "From these schools will come our readers, hearers, and pious converts," stated the missionary William M. Thomson.<sup>130</sup> Already in 1828, Eli Smith emphasized that the schools' success depended on a sufficient number of school books:<sup>131</sup>

I do not know how far the Committee wish [*sic*] us to publish school-books, such as small spelling books, Arithmetics, Geographies and Grammars, and should like instructions on this point. It is one of great importance, and needs careful consideration. For as education is almost entirely neglected, so there are very few. I had almost said no school-books of any value in Greek, Turkish, Armenian, or Arabic.<sup>132</sup>

For religious instruction, the Americans used English-language texts that were simple to read, with religious content that was quickly grasped. John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), Mary M. Sherwood's *Little Henry and his Bearer* (1814), and Legh Richmond's *The Dairyman's Daughter* (1814) were stories for

124 MH 31 (1835), in: ROS 2, 420; "Annals of the Syria Mission": ROS 5, 263. The "female school" later became a "female seminary." In the twentieth century, the school was called the Beirut College for Women, until it was finally renamed the Lebanese American University (for women and men) in 1973. See Fleischmann, "Evangelization or Education," 265–67.

125 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, December 26, 1836): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 01 (HHL).

126 MH 32 (1836), in: ROS 3, 1.

127 MH 30 (1834), in: ROS 2, 391; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 125.

128 From a letter from Henry De Forest to Anderson ('Abeih, August 15, 1850), cited in Yazigi, "American Presbyterian Mission Schools in Lebanon," 44. See also ABCFM, Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Syrian Mission (1856), 20; MH 46 (1850), in: ROS 4, 107. The boarding school existed until 1854, when De Forest had to leave for health reasons. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 95.

129 It is unknown how long this practice lasted. Smith, *Missionary Sermons and Addresses*, 166.

130 MH 32 (1836), cited in: ROS 3, 20.

131 This view was not new. Pliny Fisk and Levy Parsons presented a similar argument in 1821. See MH 17 (1821), in: ROS 1, 46.

132 Smith to Anderson (Malta, November 18, 1828): ABC 16.6, Vol. 3 (164), 5. (Here, as in all subsequent quotations from the missionaries' correspondence, emphases are from the original author.)

children and young people that were taught in various mission schools.<sup>133</sup> In the first decades of the Syria Mission, when English was still the language of instruction, these books were read in the original. From the 1840s on, the shift to teaching in Arabic<sup>134</sup> required new translations.<sup>135</sup> *The Dairyman's Daughter* was one of the first Arabic books that the American press published in Beirut in 1836.<sup>136</sup> In 1844, it published Butrus al-Bustani's translation of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.<sup>137</sup> The mission schools may also have used textbooks from Egypt. The Bulaaq press, established in Egypt in 1822, produced books on medicine, languages, history, and geography, particularly in the 1830s. These books made their way to Syria during the Egyptian occupation (1831–1840).<sup>138</sup>

Without question, the schools sponsored by the Americans in Syria did not stand alone. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, there were not enough institutions offering an advanced education to keep up with demand.<sup>139</sup> After the Jesuits reestablished their presence in the Levant, they established schools from the 1850s on that were of comparably high quality to the American institutions. In Cairo and Beirut, more schools were initiated by France than any other foreign organization.<sup>140</sup> Other Christian confessions in Syria likewise became active in education, especially to keep children from their own congregations from attending American schools. Despite the schools' popularity, the American mission reached a low point after the 1860 civil war in Mount Lebanon between the Maronites and Druzes. Without financing from Boston, nearly all of the mission schools had to close:

Thus a great many of their former pupils in the primary schools and some of those in the seminaries became prospective, if not actual, pupils at other schools: Catholic, non-American Protestant and native. Members of the mission were naturally pained to witness such developments.<sup>141</sup>

A “virtual withdrawal from the department of primary education,” as Henry Harris Jessup wrote in the *Missionary Herald* in 1865, could not be avoided.<sup>142</sup> By 1865, there was no longer a mission school in Beirut. One remaining bright spot was the former girls' boarding school of the mission, which was directed by the Syrian

133 Lindner, “Negotiating the Field,” 140. According to an 1844 report by Smith, however, these works with a characteristically Christian moral message did not always prove useful. See Smith, “Report of Works Printed at the Missionary Press in Beirut” (1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (28).

134 The debate concerning the use of English as a language of instruction took place in other missions as well, including the ABCFM mission in India. See Harris, *Nothing but Christ*, 135–41.

135 Juha, *Darwin wa al-Azma 1882 bi l-Da'ira al-Tibbiyya*, 147–48.

136 Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 82.

137 See appendix I.

138 Tibawi, “Some Misconceptions about the Nahda,” 16.

139 Thomson wrote in 1844: “If the state of general education in this country was such that youth could be found sufficiently educated in other schools to qualify them for the sacred office, as far as literary attainments are concerned, it would probably not be wise to establish a seminary of our own.” See W. M. Thomson, “Report of the Committee on the Seminary location” (April 11, 1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (24). For more on the mission seminary, see below.

140 Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 73: The French were also very active in women's education.

141 Tibawi, “The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College,” 268.

142 MH 61 (1865), in: ROS 5, 116.

convert Mikha'il 'Araman after 1860; it continued to receive the mission's support, although it was nearly self-financing.<sup>143</sup> The National School established by Butrus al-Bustani in 1863 was another positive development.

With respect to higher education in Syria, the mission's accomplishments were substantial, as will be demonstrated below. In the arena of primary schooling, however, the missionaries could not keep up with their growing competition.<sup>144</sup>

### 3. "Satisfactory evidence of piety"<sup>145</sup>: Establishing Syrian Protestant congregations<sup>146</sup>

In 1847, a small circle of Syrian Protestant converts took the first steps to found a Protestant church in Syria, which is known today as the National Evangelical Church of Beirut. When the American Board sent its first missionaries to the eastern Mediterranean, it did not intend to establish Protestant congregations on site, nor did it seek to proselytize or lure away members of other Christian confessions.<sup>147</sup> The Americans' priority was the salvation of souls.<sup>148</sup> They sought to convert Muslims and Jews, but they wanted Christian churches to reform themselves, without forc-

143 Mikha'il 'Araman had been a student at the American boys' boarding school in Beirut. He later taught at the seminary in 'Abeih (see appendix II, no. 9). The girls' boarding school, which was led by De Forest until 1854, was supposed to reopen after 1860—but only under the condition (set by the ABCFM) that neither English nor French would be taught. Since this seemed impossible to the missionaries, it was decided that an independent girls' boarding school could be maintained under 'Araman's leadership. Exclusively native teachers taught there (including 'Araman's wife Lulu, and also Rufka Gregory, a foster child of the Whiting family). After 1870, the school was administered by the Women's Board of Missions (part of the PBCFM). See MH 61 (1865), in: ROS 5, 116; MH 63 (1867), in: ROS 5, 172; Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, January 25, 1868): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (515); Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 222–23; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 163. More in chapter II, section 2.2.

144 Catholic missions, too, were very successful in this field. The Sisters of Charity and the nuns of St. Joseph supported girls' schools in the region. See Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 67. Not only the Catholics were perceived as competition, however. In Anderson's view, European Protestants were just as disruptive to American initiatives: "Zealous Protestant educators, from different parts of Europe, were becoming so numerous at Beirut as to embarrass the mission in its natural development." See Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 2, 362.

145 "Records of the Syrian Mission" (April 22, 1836): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1., 11. Satisfactory piety, and willingness to affiliate as Protestant, were the main conditions for acceptance as a member of the mission church (see below).

146 For more on this topic, see chapter III, sections 1.2 and 2.3, as well as Zeuge-Buberl, "Misinterpretations of a Missionary Policy?"

147 MH 26 (1830), in: ROS 2, 205: "Our object is not to pull down or build up a sect, but to make known and inculcate the great fundamental truths of the Gospel." See also Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 47: "The admission of converts into the church without regard to their previous ecclesiastical relation was a practical ignoring of the old church organization in the region. It was so understood, and the spirit of oppression and persecution was roused to the utmost."

148 "Our object was higher than ecclesiastical; it was the salvation of souls." See Smith to Paxton (Smyrna, January 24, 1837): ABC 16.5.1. (174).

ing the creation of separate churches.<sup>149</sup> From the 1840s on, however, Rufus Anderson introduced a change of course; breaking away from the traditional churches would be acceptable if church reform did not succeed.<sup>150</sup> The missionaries did not yet believe that the time was right. Only in 1845/46, amid growing pressure from the ABCFM,<sup>151</sup> did further discussions take place about how a new church might be organized. The number of native Protestants had grown, and they wanted to affiliate legally and publically with a church of their own: “If we remain in our present unorganized state, we shall be weak in ourselves and appear so to those around us.”<sup>152</sup> The missionaries themselves were unlikely to initiate the founding of a church, since they would have needed to settle on a single confession. The American Board was comprised of Congregational, Presbyterian, as well Dutch Reformed members.<sup>153</sup> In 1847, Syrian Protestants took the first step and drew up a constitution for a Congregational church in Beirut. The church was established around March 1848.<sup>154</sup> The Syrian Evangelical Church (*al-Kanisa al-Injiliyya al-Suriyya*), or simply “Beirut Church,”<sup>155</sup> initially had fifteen male and four female members.<sup>156</sup> The core tenets of Protestant theology were integrated into a covenant and a confession of faith, which congregation members were asked to sign.<sup>157</sup> This native congregation should not be confused with the mission church that was established by the

149 However, the “divine, renovating power” that was to reform the churches from within needed external motivation. See MH 35 (1839), in: ROS 3, 161, 163; Badr, “American Protestant Missionary Beginnings,” 225. The mission never explained in detail what the reform of the Eastern churches would entail, instead favoring broad statements like “reviving the knowledge and spirit of the Gospel to reform it.” It was suggested that individual members could be given more responsibility in church administration. See Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 130, 296.

150 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, January 11, 1840): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1., cited in Badr, “Mission to ‘Nominal Christians,’” 203.

151 The growing pressure had to do with a far more successful mission among Armenians. The first Armenian Protestant church was founded in Istanbul in 1846. See Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 417–19.

152 MH 44 (1848), in: ROS 4, 51.

153 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, April 26, 1842): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (150): “Some of us are conscientious congregationalists and cannot be accessory to the formation of a presbyterian congregation here; part are presbyterians and know not how to appreciate congregationalism.” See also Smith to Anderson (Washington, April 18, 1846): ABC 16.8.1, Vol. 3.1. (116), 6–7. Anderson believed that the missionaries should not represent the different forms of Protestantism, as they emerged during and after the medieval Reformation. Rather, determining a theological direction should be left to the indigenous Christians. See Harris, *Nothing but Christ*, 63.

154 The petition and constitution were printed in MH 44 (1848), in: ROS 4, 50–56. The petition was presented to the mission on February 9, and the council of elders held its first meeting on May 19. The church’s official date of founding is unknown. See NECB minutes (May 19, 1848), 1.

155 This should not be confused with the American Mission Church. See Lindner, “‘Making a Way into the Heart of the People,’” 72–73.

156 In 1849, there were twenty-seven members: ten from the Greek Orthodox church, four Melkites, four Maronites, five Armenians, three Druzes, and one Syrian Orthodox Christian. See Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 374.

157 Lindner, “Negotiating the Field,” 151. Both documents are printed in Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 407–11.

missionaries Bird and Goodell in 1823. With the formation of the Syrian Protestant congregation, the mission church reorganized itself as an Anglo-American congregation.<sup>158</sup> From this point forward, both congregations shared a chapel (and after 1869, a new church),<sup>159</sup> alternating between English and Arabic services. Because there was no Syrian Protestant whom the missionaries deemed sufficiently qualified to lead the Beirut Church,<sup>160</sup> William M. Thomson (and after 1849) George B. Whiting were named acting pastors.<sup>161</sup> In the following years, additional churches were founded in Hasbeiya (1851, sixteen members), Aleppo (1852, six members), 'Abeih (1852, eight members), Sidon (1856, seven members), 'Alma (1858, nine members) and 'Ain Zhalta (1864).<sup>162</sup> Although these congregations later adopted a Presbyterian church structure, they avoided specific Protestant names and practices. Rather than "Presbyterian," the congregations identified themselves as a "gathering of elders" (*majma' al-mashyakha*).<sup>163</sup>

The hurdles that the converts had to overcome in accepting a new faith were interpreted differently by both sides. For the missionaries, conversion represented moral purification: "The drunkard soon forsook his cups, the knave became an honest man, the profane ceased to swear, and the name Protestant became synonymous with all that was trustworthy and commendable."<sup>164</sup> The Orthodox churches' veneration of images, Catholic subservience to church authorities, and ignorance

158 Syria Mission to Anderson (Beirut, March 20, 1848): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (21); Copeland, *Sesquicentennial History of the Community Church of Beirut*, 8. Today the English-speaking congregation is known as the International Community Church.

159 This church building still stands in the Beirut city center and was recently renovated: *ibid.*, 12.

160 John Wortabet, Mikha'il 'Araman, Elyas Fawaz, Tannus al-Haddad, and also Butrus al-Bustani had been under discussion. See Badr, "Mission to 'Nominal Christians,'" 291–94. More in chapter III, sections 1 and 2.

161 The title indicated that the position was only temporary. An acting pastor could not dedicate all of his time to the congregation, since he had been sent as a missionary: *ibid.*, 29. The first "full-time" pastor of the Syrian Protestant congregation in Beirut was Yusuf Badr (see appendix II, no. 15).

162 Laurie, *Historical Sketch of the Syria Mission*, 14; MH 47 (1851), in ROS 4, 147; MH 48 (1852) in: ROS 4, 178; MH 52 (1856), in: ROS 4, 248; MH 54 (1858), in: ROS 4, 315; MH 60 (1864), in: ROS 5, 95.

163 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 475. In her 2015 dissertation, Deanna Ferree Womack looks more closely at the restructuring of the Syrian Evangelical churches according to the American Presbyterian model, which became an open source of conflict between the Beirut congregation and the Syria Mission. See Womack, "Conversion, Controversy, and Cultural Production."

164 These were Laurie's words to converts in the small town of Hasbeiya. See Laurie, *Historical Sketch of the Syria Mission*, 15. In his report for the Syria Mission's annual meeting in 1850, the American Whiting discussed the new members of the Beirut congregation in a milder, friendlier tone: "In regard to the spiritual condition of the church, while there are, on the one hand, some things to deplore; such as the want of more spirituality, zeal and love; there are, on the other, many things calling for devout thankfulness, and tending to encourage our hopes. The members of the church generally, have shown a becoming interest in the means of grace and all the ordinances of the gospel." See MH 46 (1850), in: ROS 4, 104.

of the Holy Scripture as the source of salvation were signs of pure sinfulness.<sup>165</sup> Through conversion, these failings were overcome.<sup>166</sup> This dualism was characteristic of missionary undertakings at this time. The attitude of “leading sinners out of darkness into the light” lacked respect for the historical evolution of the Eastern churches. “The same that leads me to give a poor, blind beggar in the streets a few paras ... In the same manner, I see you here spiritually blind, and poor ... and I come to put into your hands the bread of eternal life.”<sup>167</sup>

For Syrian Protestants, on the other hand, the new religion meant breaking with the centuries-old traditions of their families. Religion provided a sense of belonging. For the first time, there was an opportunity to reflect on the practices of faith, and to talk and debate with others about the contents of the Bible. The Protestant church saw itself as a new kind of community. The missionary Henry Harris Jessup wrote that it was the only site “where converts from all these warring sects sit together as brethren.”<sup>168</sup> The missionaries were aware that they seemed like “visitors from another planet.” But their intended audience had been raised into a wholly false faith. “An opprobrium threatens them, should they change their religion for ours, bringing not only contempt upon themselves, but also disgrace upon their families.”<sup>169</sup>

However, this was not the only reason why the Protestant congregation grew so slowly. In 1850, there was only one native church, and not a single Syrian who had been ordained as a pastor. The missionaries themselves ultimately bore responsibility for its hesitant growth. Before new members were accepted into the native congregation, they first had to establish the honorability of their intentions and “evidence of piety.” This required a demonstration of spiritual awakening. In the missionaries’ home churches, the usual practice was “revival – conversion – public confession.”<sup>170</sup> If such a profound internal change was not apparent, a new candidate’s faith could be questioned. Not all of the missionaries saw this practice as sensible for the growth of the Syrian Evangelical Church. Cornelius Van Dyck argued that acceptance of Jesus Christ should be sufficient. Eli Smith<sup>171</sup> and others feared that a compromise solution would undermine the significance of their

165 MH 20 (1824), in: ROS 1, 231. Catalogues of vices that supposedly described the population were not uncommon in the MH, including “astonishing pride, jealousy, dishonesty, treachery, falsehood, and hypocrisy.” See MH 32 (1836), in: ROS 3, 30. The Syrians practiced “irreligion.” See MH 25 (1829), in: ROS 2, 180.

166 “Turning the heart from the love of sin to the love of holiness.” See MH 22 (1826), in: ROS 1, 349.

167 These were the missionary Jonas King’s words to a Greek Catholic priest. See MH 21 (1825), in: ROS 1, 326.

168 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 83.

169 Smith, *Missionary Sermons and Addresses*, 154. Smith was entirely aware of the difficulties that accompanied conversion. In 1828, he reported to the *Missionary Herald* that Syrian Protestants were socially marginalized and unable to find work. To avoid being shamed, a convert’s family would use all means possible to change his decision. See MH 24 (1828), in: ROS 2, 23.

170 Badr, “Mission to ‘Nominal Christians,’” 266.

171 In 1836, Smith adopted a more liberal position towards those who were interested in the congregation: “If any are excommunicated from the church we may admit them to our church.” See Smith to Paxton (Smyrna, January 24, 1837): ABC 16.5.1. (174).

message, although they also understood that a radical interpretation of their own principles would not help the native converts.<sup>172</sup> Moreover, it became clear that the Syrians had a different conception of piety.<sup>173</sup> Some missionaries, like Simeon H. Calhoun, would not be swayed from their traditional stance, arguing that the individual awakening experience was an unconditional requirement for acceptance into the community of faith.<sup>174</sup> Rufus Anderson finally addressed the topic in a long letter from June 27, 1850. The American Board could no longer tolerate the paralysis of the native congregations. Even if some converts had acted incorrectly, this was no reason to deny others' acceptance into the church. Anderson ultimately instructed his colleagues to take a chance. For some time, the impression in Boston had been that the Syrian Mission was "too conservative; too cautious in its progress; too distrustful of its converts."<sup>175</sup>

The reason for some missionaries' careful behavior can be found in the core principles of the ABCFM. In the early 1840s, Anderson developed the so-called "Three Self" program. According to these guidelines, indigenous Protestant congregations in the mission field were to be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating.<sup>176</sup> "Such churches, and only such, are the life, strength, and glory of missions," Anderson stated.<sup>177</sup> After missionaries oversaw the natives' conversion and the education of new pastors, the congregations were supposed to be able to exist on their own, without foreign assistance. For the ABCFM, this made financial sense as well. Training hundreds of young people to become "native agents," and supporting native preachers and their families, was more cost-effective than supporting just a few missionaries who were accustomed to a certain living standard.<sup>178</sup> However, as the historian Paul W. Harris correctly notes, native agency was more about the need for efficiency than about equal status.<sup>179</sup> This was immediately apparent in the first obstacle that arose in implementing the Three Self program. Because of their inexperience, the congregations could not function independently from the very beginning. It is not surprising that Anderson wanted to keep a certain hierarchical order in place, with the native pastors subordinate to the missionaries,

172 More in chapter II, section 1.2.

173 According to Badr, Christians in the Middle East favored a more theologically oriented piety. ("Mission to 'Nominal Christians,'" 306–7) Smith reported that the Christians saw theological controversies as a living form of piety. See Smith to Anderson (Washington, April 18, 1846): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 3.1 (116).

174 Badr, "Mission to 'Nominal Christians,'" 241.

175 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, June 27, 1850): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 13 (HHL).

176 From R. Anderson, *Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims* (New York, 1869) cited in Beaver, *To Advance the Gospel*, 97. Interestingly, Henry Venn (secretary of the English Church Missionary Society) and Rufus Anderson (from the ABCFM) developed the same theory, independent of one another. See C. P. Williams, *The Ideal of the Self-Governing Church: A Study in Victorian Missionary Strategy* (Leiden, 1999), cited in Tjelle, *Missionary Masculinity*, 41 (note 68).

177 Anderson, *Foreign Missions*, cited in Beaver, *To Advance the Gospel*, 98.

178 This was Anderson's calculation in his "Proposal for raising up a Native Ministry in the several Missions": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8, printed MH 37 (1841), 186–89.

179 Harris, *Nothing but Christ*, 162.

who were to act as “ecclesiastical fathers and advisers.”<sup>180</sup> In 1848, Anderson provided the following explanation for this continued dependence: “Considering the weakness and waywardness so generally found in men just emerging from heathenism, native pastors must, for a time, and in certain respects, be practically subordinate to the missionaries, by whom their churches were formed ...”<sup>181</sup>

The missionaries’ controlling behavior extended to the church members as well. Only pious and devout Christians could be entrusted to participate in the formation of a self-governing church. The problem ultimately lay in the inconsistent implementation of Rufus Anderson’s program. Instead of clearly separating the missionaries from the native preachers and ordained pastors, as Anderson himself had proposed in 1845,<sup>182</sup> their areas of responsibility blurred, and Syrian theologians were not seen as equals.<sup>183</sup> Opinions on this matter were divided within the Syria Mission. Some resisted allowing an ordained Syrian pastor to assume full responsibility for his congregation,<sup>184</sup> while others argued that he should not be dependent on the mission.<sup>185</sup> This was also true for John Wortabet. Although he was called “pastor” (in Arabic: *rā ṭ*)<sup>186</sup> of the Hasbeiya congregation,<sup>187</sup> documents of the Syria Mission refer to him as an “evangelist,” or preacher.<sup>188</sup> Contradictory statements about Wortabet’s title appear elsewhere as well. While a station report from Hasbeiya called Wortabet “Reverend” in 1853,<sup>189</sup> two years later he was introduced in the

180 Beaver, *To Advance the Gospel*, 99; Harris, “Denominationalism and Democracy,” 63–64. Here, Paul W. Harris’s assessment of Anderson is apt: “Rufus Anderson articulated an ideology that appeared respectful of other cultures while remaining fundamentally Eurocentric in its orientation, and he propounded a theory that sought to foster native agency by suppressing indigenous aspirations.” (*Nothing but Christ*, 162–63)

181 From the 1848 annual report of the ABCFM, cited in Beaver, *To Advance the Gospel*, 123.

182 “The Society sends forth men to be evangelists, rather than permanent pastors; and when pastors are required by the progress and success of the work, it seeks them among native converts on the ground. And herein it differs from the appropriate usages of the Home Missionary Society, which, operating on feeble churches with Christian communities ... sends forth its preachers all to become settled pastors as soon as possible.” Cited in Beaver, *To Advance the Gospel*, 81.

183 With the Armenian mission, things were different. In this case, American missionaries vehemently opposed the unequal treatment of their brothers in faith. See Harris, “Denominationalism and Democracy,” 71.

184 This attitude was held not only by American missionaries. In the 1860s, the Kaiserswerth deaconesses in Beirut also had reservations about educating their students to become deaconesses of the same status. See Hauser, “... das hier so furchtbar verwahrloste weibliche Geschlecht aus dem Stande heben zu helfen,” 230.

185 Van Dyck to Anderson (‘Abeih, August 17, 1850): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (320). More on this letter in chapter II, section 2.2.

186 In an 1886 text about the need for native pastors, these were identified as “*rā’in*,” which also means “shepherds.” See Syria Mission, *Fi Daruriyya Iqamat Khidmatin li-l-Injil*, 10. William Thomson, the first pastor of the native Beirut church, was referred to as “*qasīs*” (meaning “minister” or “reverend”). In 1890, the first native pastor of the Beirut church, Yusuf Badr, was also called “*qasīs*.” See NECB minutes (May 19, 1848), 2 and 67.

187 MH 49 (1853), in: ROS 4, 188.

188 “Records of the Syria Mission 1853–1860” (March 24, 1853): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1., 7.

189 MH 50 (1854), in: ROS 4, 210.

*Missionary Herald* as “one native preacher.”<sup>190</sup> When Saliba Jerawan was ordained as a “native pastor” in Homs in 1864, the annual report of the ABCFM stated that Wortabet had already received this distinction eleven years earlier.<sup>191</sup> The ABCFM distinguished between licensed preachers and ordained pastors,<sup>192</sup> although when reading mission sources, it is evident that the two terms were not always applied correctly. In Wortabet’s case, there did not seem to be a consensus as to whether he was a preacher with a limited field of responsibility, or instead an ordained pastor, with the same responsibilities as the American missionaries. In Hasbeiya he acted as a native pastor, but with less responsibility than he would have liked. Wortabet’s departure from the mission in 1859 suggests that the status that he had earned as a trained theologian had not been fully recognized. One year later, Anderson reflected:<sup>193</sup> “What would probably have been the effect, if . . . he [Wortabet] had been installed really and fully as the pastor of the church at Hasbeiya?”<sup>194</sup>

Another difficult question was compensation for native pastors. According to Anderson’s Three Self program, self-governing congregations should be able to provide for the income of their pastors. Because the young congregations were not yet in the position to do so,<sup>195</sup> they depended on the Americans’ financial support and remained under the Americans’ control. Van Dyck argued that the young congregations’ financial dependence should not give the mission the right to control them:

What infant church in these days supports its own pastor entirely? If the Board is willing . . . a part of the funds should be thus expended, shall we stand in the way? Because the Board aids in the support of the pastor must the church therefore be in bondage to the Mission so as to damp and cramp its every movement which is the case, even when the pastor is one [of] your own members?<sup>196</sup>

Anderson believed that the missionaries should continue to assist the indigenous churches, and he was prepared to lend – or at an appropriate time, even to donate – money for their construction. Nevertheless, in the near future the Syrian

190 MH 51 (1855), in: ROS 4, 218.

191 “Fifty-Fourth Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions 1864,” 91.

192 “Proposal for Raising up a Native Ministry in the Several Missions,” in: MH 37 (1841), 187. For Presbyterians, the pastor holds the highest office within a congregation. “Preachers” are pastoral candidates who may be ordained after a satisfactory period of probation. See Presbyterian Church in the USA, *The Form of Government, the Discipline, and the Directory for Worship*, 407–8, 431.

193 Liebau makes similar observations with respect to the Danish-Halle mission (or Tranquebar) mission of 1706–1845 (*Die indischen Mitarbeiter der Tranquebarmission*, 132).

194 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, June 8, 1860): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 26 (HHL), (emphasis in the original). More on the conflict between Wortabet and the mission in chapter III, section 2.3. Anderson did not want to lose newly ordained pastors. In 1862, he wrote to the mission that two candidates being considered for ordination should be assigned to a congregation as soon as possible. Otherwise, their relationship to the mission would be unclear, and they might lose their initiative. See Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, March 21, 1862): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 28.

195 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 155: “In fact, no effort had been made up to this time to enforce or induce self-support in the feeble native churches. Nothing was paid for their preaching and education.”

196 Van Dyck to Anderson (‘Abeih, August 17, 1850): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (320).

Protestants would have to support their own church. As long as the native congregations received financial assistance from abroad, the mission retained the rights of supervision and hiring or firing the pastor.<sup>197</sup> Others doubted whether the Syrian Protestants possessed sufficient spiritual motivation to achieve financial independence. One such voice belonged to Dr. Bacon, member of the American Home Missionary Society and advisor to the American Board, who visited the missions in western Asia in 1850. Bacon emphasized that initiative would have to come from the Syrians themselves, although he had not yet observed any such willingness to assume responsibility.<sup>198</sup>

If the ABCFM and Anderson were initially in agreement that it was the missionaries' task to support native clerics and then leave the mission field, in 1861 Anderson had to admit that "this imperfect state of the native churches, and the circumstances in which they exist, have made it difficult for the missions to reach a point where these churches might be safely left, even after the native community had become Christianized."<sup>199</sup> By 1870, there was still no statement from the ABCFM that this point had been reached.<sup>200</sup>

#### 4. Advanced schooling "in the native style": The seminary in 'Abeih

Institutions of higher learning were an indispensable component of missions, Anderson wrote in his 1838 article "Missionary Schools." Essential for training new pastors and teachers for the mission schools, such institutions could prepare the way for an independent Christian congregation.<sup>201</sup> Nevertheless, in 1860 there were only six seminaries in the approximately twenty-seven foreign missions of the ABCFM.<sup>202</sup> In 1837, the boys' boarding school in Beirut (which had been founded two years earlier) was renamed a "mission seminary"; its purpose was to provide an English-language education for future preachers and missionaries.<sup>203</sup> English

197 This was recorded in a statement about the necessity of native pastors and churches: Syria Mission, *Fi Daruriyya Iqamat Khidmatin li-l-Injil*, 11.

198 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, July 11, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8 (4).

199 ABCFM, *Memorial Volume*, 250.

200 Bonk, *The Theory and Practice of Missionary Identification*, 161: Interactions with native congregations changed in all areas of mission work in Europe and America at the end of the nineteenth century. At a New York mission conference in 1900, there was agreement that missionary and native administrative bodies should work separately from one another. Native congregations could uphold their own cultural character if they were not influenced by the missionaries' otherness.

201 Anderson, "Missionary Schools," 110.

202 Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 358.

203 Yazigi, "American Presbyterian Mission Schools in Lebanon," 32: The curriculum expanded to include Arabic, English, geography, astronomy, history and church history, mathematics, rhetoric ("which in the Arab sense is a popular study"), philosophy, composition and translation, Bible study, and sacred music.

A "seminary" was an institution that provided professional training for preachers, but also instruction in other subjects. To meet these diverse educational goals, cooperation with a boarding school was essential. See Sabra, *Truth and Service*, 13–14.

missionaries established similar colleges in Jerusalem (1842) and on Malta (1846), but these did not last long.<sup>204</sup> The Beirut seminary did not realize its goal of training new missionary talent, and it also had to close in August 1842.<sup>205</sup> A report that was written on the occasion of Rufus Anderson's visit in 1844 reflected on the reasons for this failure. Not only were the incoming students too young and inexperienced, but the school's Western orientation – English was the language of instruction, and the missionaries held all authority – encouraged an affinity for all things Western and ignorance of the students' own culture.

The changing political situation, and the growing demand for translators by European businessmen and military officers, increasingly lured away seminary students. Of the more than sixty original boarding school students, only twelve remained in 1842.<sup>206</sup> Anderson's visit to the Levant in 1843/44 led him to promote an additional mission strategy beyond the Three Self program: discouraging the “denationalization” of the Arab population.<sup>207</sup> Although in its early years the ABCFM supported the anglicization of Native Americans (“they will more readily become assimilated in habits and manners to their white neighbors”),<sup>208</sup> native languages were supposed to be used for preaching and teaching in its overseas missions. Anderson was devastated by the Westernization of the children and youth in the Syrian mission schools: “I found in Syria, that the pupils of the old mission seminary at Beirut were so anglicized in their ideas and tastes that they became disgusted with their countrymen, and even with their noble Arabian tongue, and were unfitted in great measure for doing good to their people. . . .”<sup>209</sup>

The closing of the Beirut seminary was supposed to be temporary, only “to get it out of Beirut.”<sup>210</sup> The small town of 'Abeih, half of which lay in the mountains south of Beirut, appeared well suited for this purpose. Van Dyck, Thomson, and Bustani were sent there to found a school in 1843. After the construction of a new building in 1846,<sup>211</sup> this became the mission seminary.<sup>212</sup> This institution, which resembled a high school,<sup>213</sup> was supposed to emphasize theological education more strongly than had been the case in Beirut.<sup>214</sup> As Anderson had advocated, “the education was to be essentially Arabic, the clothing, boarding and lodging strictly in

204 Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 168: The Jerusalem college closed after the death of its director in 1845; the college on Malta probably closed for financial reasons.

205 W. M. Thomson, “The Committee in the results of the Seminary submit[s] the following report” (April 6, 1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (23).

206 Ibid.

207 Anderson, *Foreign Missions*, 99.

208 “Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting” (1816), in: ABCFM (1834), 136.

209 Anderson to the Sandwich Islands mission (July 19, 1845): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 8.

210 Van Dyck, “Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission,” 12.

211 Also in 1846, the Jesuits opened their seminary in Ghazir, north of Beirut. In addition to training new clerics, the seminary also educated laypeople, allowing it largely to finance itself. See Verdeil, “Between Rome and France,” 26. In 1875, the seminary moved to Beirut, becoming the Université Saint-Joseph that still exists today. See Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, 36.

212 MH 40 (1844), in: ROS 3, 388–89; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 107.

213 ABCFM, Annual Report 1868, 50.

214 MH 43 (1847), in: ROS 4, 2–4.

the native style, and the students were to be kept as far as possible in sympathy with their own people.”<sup>215</sup> Only basic instruction was given in English. Conveniently, this kept students from reading the works of European authors like Engels, Marx, and Darwin, which the missionaries associated with the spread of destructive and anarchic ideologies.<sup>216</sup> The loss of students to outside influences – as had occurred in Beirut – was to be avoided at all costs.

In contrast to the mission schools, stricter attention was paid to the seminary students’ evangelization; festivals and days of fasting from other religions were not observed. The intent was to accept only those applicants who had renounced their own churches,<sup>217</sup> although this could not be consistently enforced. The duration of a course of studies at ‘Abeih was initially left open, to be settled over time.<sup>218</sup> Despite the language of instruction, the course plan adhered to the model of an elite American education at this time, beginning with the main subjects: systematic study of the Bible, grammar, arithmetic, and geography.<sup>219</sup> Van Dyck and Bustani initially divided teaching duties, with the latter responsible for Arabic grammar and arithmetic in the morning, and Van Dyck for Bible study and geography in the afternoon.<sup>220</sup> The subjects of astronomy, trigonometry, rhetoric, and English were added later, and the study of poetry was introduced in grammar lessons.<sup>221</sup> As reported in the *Missionary Herald*, the seminary “is, we suppose, the only institution in Syria where the true principles of science are taught.”<sup>222</sup> The American Board was not concerned that religious instruction might lag behind the other fields of study: “The plain, simple theology of the Scriptures can be taught to youth, and even to heathen youth, in every stage of their education.”<sup>223</sup> Nevertheless, in 1850 the course plan was reoriented to place a stronger emphasis on theology, with the other subjects more clearly subordinate to the main field of study.<sup>224</sup> With respect to learning materials, the seminary could hardly measure up to the American standard. At first, there were no schoolbooks except for works on Arabic grammar:

All instruction must be given orally, and the pupils make the books as they proceed, under the direction of the teacher, which takes more time than would otherwise be necessary during the time of instruction, and throws upon the teacher a great amount of study, to ensure the necessary accuracy in thus preparing text books for future use.<sup>225</sup>

215 Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 273.

216 Juha, *Darwin wa al-Azma 1882 bi l-Da'ira al-Tibbiyya*, 148.

217 Yazigi, “American Presbyterian Mission Schools in Lebanon,” 36.

218 Five to ten years was suggested for the education of pastors, with additional private instruction from the missionaries after the completion of seminary training: MH 37 (1841), 187.

219 MH 43 (1847), in: ROS 4, 2.

220 Van Dyck to Anderson (‘Abeih, November 9, 1846): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (315); Yazigi, “American Presbyterian Mission Schools in Lebanon,” 36.

221 MH 46 (1850), in: ROS 4, 111.

222 Ibid., 112–13.

223 Anderson, “Missionary Schools,” 110.

224 MH 46 (1850), in: ROS 4, 113.

225 MH 43 (1847), in: ROS 4, 3.

The school was directed by Cornelius Van Dyck from 1846 to 1849, and by his colleague Simeon H. Calhoun from 1849 to 1875.<sup>226</sup> The numbers of incoming and outgoing students were documented regularly. There were fewer than ten students in the first class of instruction, but interest in advanced schooling grew with each year. In 1876, twenty-nine new students were added to the twenty who already resided at 'Abeih. Students were between eleven and thirty years old, although eventually no boys younger than fourteen were admitted. In 1847, Van Dyck reported there had unfortunately been no official case of conversion at the seminary. All of the students remained loyal to their previous confessions, despite strong interest in Biblical discussions and devotions.<sup>227</sup> Despite the school's pronounced theological orientation, in 1875 only twelve of twenty students identified as Protestant. Of the twenty-nine new students accepted the following year, there were likewise only twelve. The seminary was open to all confessions. Maronites, Druzes, and members of the Rum Orthodox church attended the school, as did Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. Class sizes seem to have fluctuated. The school's annual records reveal that, particularly after vacations, some students left 'Abeih without providing a reason.<sup>228</sup> The civil war-like hostilities that plagued Syria at this time, and family objections to a school of a different confession, may have played a role.

Of the 'Abeih seminary's 117 graduates between the 1850s and 1870s, around two-thirds pursued a career in teaching. Only a few of the graduates who were listed as teachers were also identified as preachers. Some graduates became printers.<sup>229</sup> As Van Dyck summarized in 1868, "No institution which we have yet had has brought out these pastors and preachers."<sup>230</sup> (Figure 2)

By the end of the 1860s, the seminary's fate appeared to be sealed. Sinking demand in the region's Protestant congregations, which were financially insecure to begin with, meant fewer seminary candidates. With the founding of the Syrian Protestant College in 1866, the 'Abeih seminary became one of the institutions that was supposed to prepare students for college study. After 1869, an independent school of theology with two paths of study, Biblical history and exegesis/church history, was established within the seminary.<sup>231</sup> Preachers and pastors were henceforth to receive the highest possible education – no longer just basic instruction – within three years.<sup>232</sup> After the first class graduated in 1872, there was again a shortage of new applicants. The seminary moved back to Beirut in 1873, in order to be closer to the SPC and possibly attract new candidates.<sup>233</sup> At the end of the 1860s, the college

226 "Abeih Seminary Records" (1848–1878): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.

227 "State and Prospects of the Seminary": MH 43 (1847), in: ROS 4, 26.

228 "Abeih Seminary Records" (1848–1878): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.

229 "Catalogue of the pupils who have entered the Seminary," in: "Abeih Seminary Records": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.

230 Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, April 29, 1868): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (516).

231 "General Letter of the Syria Mission" (Beirut, January 20, 1869): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (26); Sabra, *Truth and Service*, 21.

232 Sabra, *Truth and Service*, 22.

233 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 812; Sabra, *Truth and Service*, 31. Thirteen of the candidates who were accepted at the SPC in 1872 came from 'Abeih or the Scottish mission schools. See Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 244 (no. 51).

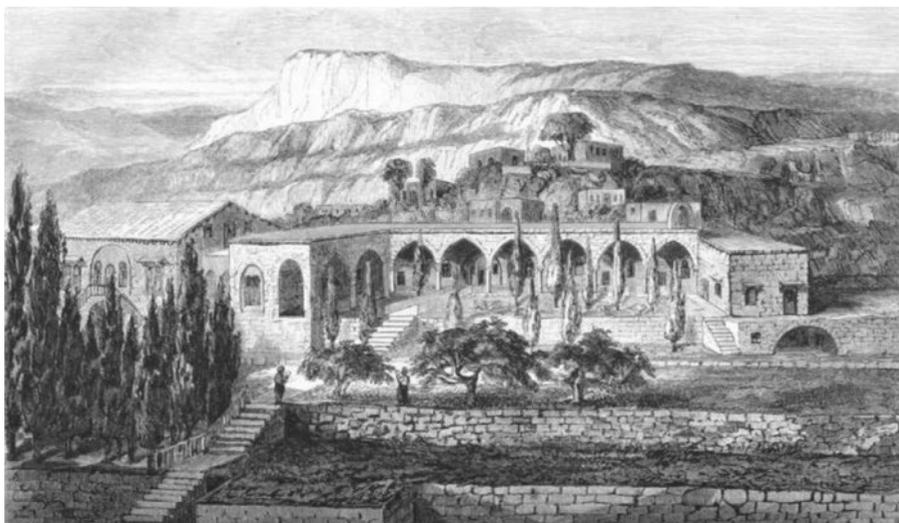


Figure 2: Mission seminary in 'Abeih

wanted the seminary to become an official “preparatory department” for the SPC. Responsibility for its financing, however, was to stay with the mission, which was reluctant to see the seminary incorporated within the college.<sup>234</sup> In 1874, seminary director James S. Dennis finally recognized that the institution’s continued existence depended upon its integration within the SPC.<sup>235</sup> That same year, SPC president Daniel Bliss wrote that “the College is a power now – and the Mission will be glad yet to avail itself of our influence. If the Theological Seminary succeeds it will be because of the College.”<sup>236</sup> The seminary was finally integrated within the SPC in 1881 and moved to its campus. The ongoing shortage of candidates for theological study, and the failed attempt to merge the college and seminary as a single unit, led to the mission seminary’s closing in 1893, with only its school of theology continuing to exist in new form.<sup>237</sup>

234 Daniel Bliss to his wife Abby (Beirut, November 17, 1873), in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 122; Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (January 6, 1874), in: *ibid.*, 166.

235 Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (Beirut, February 7, 1874), in: *ibid.*, 191.

236 Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (Beirut, March 7, 1874), in: *ibid.*, 216.

237 Sabra, *Truth and Service*, 34. It was later decided to reconstitute the seminary as a summer school for theology, once again outside Beirut. This seminary opened in Souq al-Gharb in 1894. In 1905 the school moved back to Beirut, where it still is located today. See Lindsay, *Nineteenth Century American Schools in the Levant*, 166.

5. “We are making history out here very fast”<sup>238</sup>:  
The Syrian Protestant College

On December 3, 1866, the institution with the greatest significance for the Syria Mission in Beirut<sup>239</sup> celebrated its opening: the Syrian Protestant College (SPC, in Arabic: *Madrassa al-Kulliyya al-Suriyya al-Injiliyya*). The institution, which was modeled after an American college, allowed young men who had been educated in mission schools to complete their studies in four or more years, preparing them for professions that their rapidly developing country urgently needed.<sup>240</sup> Despite its Protestant name, from the very beginning the college was open to students of all confessions, as was typical of the other American schools.

The college will be conducted on strictly christian [*sic*] and evangelical principles, but it will not be sectarian in such a sense as to exclude from it pupils from any of the various sects of the country, christian, or non-christian, who will conform to its rules and regulations.<sup>241</sup>

As the only religious book permitted at the college, the Bible was taught regularly. In later years, SPC president Daniel Bliss was responsible for instruction in Biblical literature and religious discipline in accordance with Protestant guidelines.<sup>242</sup> Bible discussions and daily devotions were a permanent fixture of the college, and they were mandatory for all students, regardless of confession.<sup>243</sup>

Cornelius Van Dyck, William Thomson, and Daniel Bliss played a formative role in the founding of the SPC.<sup>244</sup> A college of this kind had never been established within a foreign mission of the ABCFM. Rufus Anderson sharply criticized the missionaries’ plans:

The apparent necessity of such an institution at the present time was regarded as an evil ... that an institution under the virtual control of the mission, which in its practical tendencies shall hinder you in laying the foundations of a simple, contended, independent, native pastorate all over your field, and of self-governed, self-contained churches, would be a still greater evil. ...

238 Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (Beirut, December 5, 1873), in: D. Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 136.

239 Unlike the mission seminary in ‘Abeih, the college’s Beirut location was intentionally chosen for its worldly flair. Books and teaching materials were also easier to obtain. See ABCFM to the Syria Mission (1862): ABC 76 (HHL).

240 “Prospectus and Programme of the Syrian Protestant College Institute, Beirut”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (110).

241 Ibid.

242 Ibid.

243 B. Anderson, *The American University of Beirut*, 59. For Jewish, Muslim, and Orthodox Christian students, individual terms were negotiated so that they could be absent on certain holidays. The college did not like to put such concessions in writing, however, since students were not entitled to these excused absences. See Scholz, *Foreign Education and Indigenous Reaction*, 131–32.

244 Sources often refer only to Daniel Bliss, and more generally to the missionaries in Syria, for furthering this idea. Van Dyck and Thomson, however, had long advocated for a school of higher learning. See Diab and Wählin, “The Geography of Education in Syria in 1882,” 116, citing Shahin Makarius, “al-Ma‘arif fi Suriyya,” (Education in Syria), *al-Muqtataf* 7 (1882/83): 388.

should there be anything of this nature in your proposed institution, it will be a fruitful source of mischief.<sup>245</sup>

The Prudential Committee agreed to the missionaries' proposal on the condition that the SPC would not belong to the American Board and the Syria Mission, and also that its administration would be composed of Protestants, with American missionaries in the majority, who were fluent in Arabic.<sup>246</sup> It was, however, at first unclear whether the institution would be led by Americans or Syrians. In 1862, Jessup reported to John Wortabet in Aleppo that "immediate steps [are] taken to establish a large Protestant native institution in Beirut of a high order, with the coöperation of all the missions in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt."<sup>247</sup>

It was arranged that Butrus al-Bustani would accompany the missionary J. Edwards Ford to England in order to promote the institution. However, the possibility of Syrian-American collaboration was rejected because "a native school, founded and supported by natives, should be under native control. A foreign school, founded by foreign funds, should be under foreign control."<sup>248</sup> The college had to be European-American, "in order that we may control it and that it may not work against us."<sup>249</sup> After Ford, Daniel Bliss traveled to the United States in 1862, and to England in 1864, in order to raise the necessary funds that would preclude Syrian aristocrats from holding an outsized influence.<sup>250</sup> The state of New York granted the SPC its charter in 1863, and a Board of Trustees was established to govern the college's finances, independent of the ABCFM.<sup>251</sup>

The reasons for establishing an institution of higher education, which Daniel Bliss and his colleagues presented to the ABCFM in 1862 and later recorded in the college's constitution, were not limited to securing the existence of a Protestant community in Syria.<sup>252</sup> Consequences for the entire society were also taken into consideration. Well-educated teachers, clerics, secretaries, translators, authors, interpreters, lawyers, judges, engineers, and doctors were needed throughout the land; students at the SPC could promote the well-being of their country and the Arab-speaking population.<sup>253</sup> Professorships were established in Arabic language and literature, mathematics, astronomy, engineering, chemistry, botany, natural sciences, modern languages, medicine, and law.<sup>254</sup>

To facilitate access to education for all, studying at the college had to cost as little as possible. Foreign and domestic scholarships were to provide support for

245 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, March 21, 1862): ABC 76 (HHL).

246 "Minutes of the Meeting on 18 March 1862": ABC ("Records of the Prudential Committee"), Vol. 11, cited in: Tibawi, "The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College," 270.

247 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 239.

248 *Ibid.*, 240.

249 Bliss to Anderson (Souq al-Gharb, June 13, 1862): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1.

250 *Ibid.*; Penrose, "That they may have life," 13–17.

251 SPC annual report (April 2, 1863): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2; Penrose, "That they may have life," 14. In April 1863, the members of the Board of Trustees were William A. Booth (chair), William E. Dodge, David Hoadley, Simeon B. Chittenden, Abner Kingman, and Joseph S. Ropes.

252 ABCFM to the Syria Mission (Boston, March 18, 1862): ABC 76 (HHL).

253 "Reasons for the establishment of a Syrian Protestant College": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6.

254 "Prospectus and Programme": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (110).

talented applicants, encouraging them to give back to their society.<sup>255</sup> Philanthropists from Europe and America became interested in establishing a (Western) culture of scholarship in the Near East, as Bliss reported in 1862: “There is manifested at the present time, an earnest desire on the part of many benevolent persons in England and elsewhere to see such an institution commenced, and willingness to aid in its endowment.”<sup>256</sup>

At the beginning, when Syrian-American collaboration was still under discussion, the ABCFM even considered selecting a Syrian college president.<sup>257</sup> Too many voices of opposition in the administration hindered this step. It was later asserted that even the Syrians would have decided in favor of a foreign-led college, since such an institution would inspire greater trust.<sup>258</sup> The college’s Board of Managers in Beirut included the missionaries William M. Thomson, Cornelius Van Dyck, Henry H. Jessup, as well as Simeon H. Calhoun, director of the mission seminary in ‘Abeih. A total of eighteen persons served on the Board, including British missionaries, American and British consuls, and British businessmen.<sup>259</sup> The college’s first administration and faculty consisted entirely of Americans – with the exception of two Arab tutors, Nasif al-Yaziji<sup>260</sup> for Arabic, and As‘ad al-Shadudi<sup>261</sup> for mathematics.<sup>262</sup> Other Syrian instructors and tutors came later, but only John Wortabet, who taught in the medical department with Van Dyck, received the title of professor in 1867.<sup>263</sup> Despite the goals stated in an 1863 prospectus, to employ “educated and pious natives of the country” as professors and teachers so that they could “assume the entire management of the institution as soon as possible,”<sup>264</sup> the SPC chose a different path. Forty years later, its leadership continued to maintain that an American and European faculty was in the college’s best interest – although the topic was highly controversial among Syrian instructors and students.<sup>265</sup> Only in 1909 did the first Syrian instructor (in Arabic) become a full professor; other Syrians followed in his footsteps.<sup>266</sup>

255 American University of Beirut, History, accessed July 2012, <http://www.aub.edu.lb/main/about/Pages/history.aspx>. The mission continued to support students after 1870, under the leadership of the Presbyterian Board. See SPC annual report (1882): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 61.

256 Daniel Bliss, “Extracts from Massachusetts” (January 27, 1862): ABC 76 (HHL).

257 ABCFM to Bliss and Thomson (1861): ABC 76 (HHL).

258 According to Bliss in *Reminiscences*, 165.

259 Yazigi, “American Presbyterian Mission Schools in Lebanon,” 39. According to the college’s 1863 “Prospectus and Programme,” this was to be the only board. The Board of Trustees in New York was added later. See ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (110).

260 See appendix II, no. 75.

261 See appendix II, no. 55.

262 Tibawi, “The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College,” 276.

263 In 1883 there were ten American professors, assistant professors, and tutors, as well as five Syrian lecturers and teachers. See SPC annual report (1883): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2. Arab and American instructors received equal treatment only after the college’s renaming as the American University of Beirut in 1920.

264 “Prospectus and Programme”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (110).

265 More in Scholz, *Foreign Education and Indigenous Reaction*, 319–23.

266 Khalaf, “New England Puritanism,” 66.

At first, Arabic was designated as the language of instruction, part of the college's effort "not to *denationalize* [the students] by the acquisition of foreign and expensive tastes and habits."<sup>267</sup> This policy corresponded with Anderson's vision, although it was ultimately not upheld. The Arabic language presented numerous challenges for a high-quality education. For one, non-native instructors needed to have a high level of linguistic competence in order to teach in their subjects of specialty. Beyond this, Arabic-language teaching materials were difficult to come by. Specialized, up-to-date literature was typically in English. Between 1874 and 1883, English gradually became the official language of the institution.<sup>268</sup> Students who had not mastered English could not access modern scholarship, limited instead to books that were "saturated with errors in religion, morals law, politics, medicine and social life," as explained by Daniel Bliss in 1876 (although he himself had little knowledge of Arabic).<sup>269</sup> The college's president argued that new Arabic literature would emerge only if Arabic-speaking authors had access to modern scholarship in English: "If Arabic literature is ever to be enriched by books . . . these books must be written by the natives them-selves."<sup>270</sup> The change in language encouraged graduates from other missionary colleges in Istanbul (Robert College) and 'Aintab (Central Turkey College), as well as non-Arab applicants from other countries, to attend the SPC.<sup>271</sup> Not all of the missionaries in Syria were pleased, especially since graduates from 'Abeih (where Arabic was taught) had been entrusted to the college.<sup>272</sup> For the American mission schools, Arabic remained the language of instruction.<sup>273</sup>

The system of education at the college was completely oriented to the American model, earning it the ambivalent reputation of an excellent educational facility in the Middle East – where, according to its critics, students were alienated from their own culture.<sup>274</sup> The discipline that was expected of the students seemed unusual to family members and other outside observers. College students were asked to pursue their studies for four years without interruption, even while separated from their families.<sup>275</sup> The foreign administration of the SPC did have many advantages. New equipment and teaching materials were readily available, with missionaries, teachers, as well as students contributing to the plant, animal, fossil, and mineral collec-

267 "Prospectus and Programme": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (110).

268 Juha, *Darwin wa al-Azma 1882 bi l-Da'ira al-Tibbiyya*, 150–51: This step would have been unthinkable at the college's founding, since the first applicants did not have sufficient knowledge of English.

269 SPC annual report (July 18, 1878): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 45; Womack, "Lubnani, Libanais, Lebanese," 9.

270 SPC annual report (July 18, 1878): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 45.

271 Juha, *Darwin wa al-Azma 1882 bi l-Da'ira al-Tibbiyya*, 162.

272 Tibawi quotes from the archive of the PBCFM (Index vol. 4, no. 141: W.W. Eddy, July 30, 1878) in "The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College," 281 (note 50); Juha, *Darwin wa al-Azma 1882 bi l-Da'ira al-Tibbiyya*, 163.

273 Womack, "Lubnani, Libanais, Lebanese," 8.

274 Scholz, *Foreign Education and Indigenous Reaction*, 276–77.

275 Khalaf, "New England Puritanism," 63. In 1869, the missionaries reported that discipline at the college was stricter than in the United States. In contrast to American colleges, Latin was also taught (in addition to French and English). See "Annual Report of the Beirut Station, 1869": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (39).

tions.<sup>276</sup> Donations of books and other materials from the United States, as well as from organizations like the London Religious Tract Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society, enriched the college's library and other facilities.<sup>277</sup> Top graduates had the opportunity to continue their studies in the United States or elsewhere.<sup>278</sup> If the college initially could not match the standards of Western universities, these gradually improved with the addition of new facilities. In 1873, Van Dyck himself paid for the astronomy department's Lee Observatory.<sup>279</sup> In years to come, the observatory maintained regular or even daily contact with similar facilities in Istanbul, Vienna, London, and Washington DC, exchanging measurements by telegram.<sup>280</sup>

For Americans steeped in Puritanism, there was no contradiction between science and Protestant principles; the college's preamble emphasized the bond between them. Learning and scholarship fit entirely within the Protestant Christian worldview. The "truth" that was propagated by the missionaries and teachers at the SPC "encompassed all 'correct' knowledge; religious doctrines, common-sense beliefs, and scientific theories."<sup>281</sup> On the relationship of faith and knowledge, Bliss wrote: "Belief without knowledge may become a degrading, wicked superstition; with knowledge, it becomes a rational faith, soaring far above the knowledge, from which it started in its upward flight."<sup>282</sup>

After opening with only sixteen students in 1866, the college quickly gained the favor of the local population. From the very beginning, the college's doors were open to Jews, Druzes, as well as Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. At the cornerstone-laying ceremony for College Hall on land that had been newly acquired<sup>283</sup> in Ras Beirut in 1871, Bliss declared:

This College is for all conditions and classes of men without regard to colour, nationality, race or religion. A man white, black or yellow; Christian, Jew, Mohammedan or heathen, may enter and enjoy all the advantages of this institution for three, four or eight years; and go out believing in one God, in many Gods, or in no God. But it will be impossible for any one to continue with us long without knowing what we believe to be the truth and our reasons for that belief.<sup>284</sup>

The openness proclaimed by Bliss in this often-cited speech must, however, be read with the last sentence in mind. The college's reason for existence was the Protestant faith. Although the institution hoped that its Bible discussions and devotions

276 See, for example, the SPC annual report (June 1869): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 7.

277 "Statement of the Condition of the College" (January 15, 1869) and annual report (1886): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 5–6 and 96.

278 F. J. Bliss, *Reminiscences*, 188.

279 At this time, the SPC did not have the financial means to construct an observatory. After Van Dyck's resignation, the equipment was purchased back from him in 1883. SPC annual report (July 10, 1883): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 77.

280 SPC annual report (1877): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 38.

281 Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University*, 2; B. Anderson, *The American University of Beirut*, 4.

282 Rugh, *The Voice of Daniel Bliss*, 66.

283 With the Ottoman Empire's increasing openness to Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, foreigners were allowed to acquire and hold property tax-free. This was an important precondition for the establishment of the SPC. See Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 171.

284 F. J. Bliss, *Reminiscences*, 198.

would win students over to Protestantism, the actual number of Syrian Protestants who studied there seems to have been low.<sup>285</sup> They are hardly mentioned in the annual reports of the Syrian Protestant College.<sup>286</sup> Until the 1882/83 academic year, the SPC regularly hired native teachers who were not members of the Protestant church, demonstrating the openness that Bliss had touted in 1871. Things changed after a scandal involving the chemistry and geology professor Edwin Lewis. In July 1882, Lewis delivered a commencement address on the topic of “Knowledge, Science, and Wisdom,” extolling the work of Charles Darwin and other British scientists, whose theories sought to explain the possible origins of natural phenomena.<sup>287</sup> Not for the first time, the college’s division was evident: a conservative camp led by President Bliss, Professor George Post, Professor Harvey Porter, and the missionaries William Eddy and Henry Harris Jessup stood in opposition to a liberal camp, which included Cornelius and William Van Dyck, John Wortabet, Edwin Lewis, and others.<sup>288</sup> Lewis, who was already considered a troublemaker because of his liberal views, came under harsh attack.<sup>289</sup> James S. Dennis, speaking on behalf of the Syria Mission, denounced Lewis publicly as well.<sup>290</sup> Lewis finally submitted his resignation, which was accepted without objection from the Board of Trustees in New York. “Lewis’ resignation accepted takes effect at once – Salary to January forty pounds passage. Seventy-five pounds additional.”<sup>291</sup> A number of students left with Lewis, disagreeing with how their professor had been forced out in the middle of the semester, just before exams.<sup>292</sup> Their petitions to reinstate Professor Lewis, and complaints that they had been left hanging, did not move Bliss and his colleagues. The Syrians Ya‘qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr – who not only taught at the college, but since 1876 also had also edited the popular scientific journal *al-Muqtataf* – spoke out on Lewis’s behalf. Their dismissal from the college did not stop them from continuing to publish informative articles on Darwin’s theory in their journal.<sup>293</sup> At the college, the incident had several consequences. Employee contracts were henceforth limited to four rather than twenty-nine years, which was intended to discourage close relationships between students and professors.<sup>294</sup> After 1883, all instructors were required to sign a Declaration of Principles, affirming not only their membership in a Protestant church, but also their acceptance of the Protestant faith and the college’s missionary goals.<sup>295</sup> “The orthodoxy of the College

285 As Betty Anderson emphasizes, at this time no Protestant colleges in the United States pursued such attempts at conversion as the SPC in Beirut. See *The American University of Beirut*, 3.

286 See ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2.

287 Juha, *Darwin wa al-Azma 1882 bi l-Da`ira al-Tibbiyya*, 51–52.

288 *Ibid.*, 54.

289 *Ibid.*, 56–58.

290 Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 233 (no. 9).

291 “A Statement. 1883 by the President of the Board of Managers”: ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 69.

292 *Ibid.*

293 Tibawi, “The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College,” 287.

294 Tafili, “Kumiliyus Fan Dayk dud Danil Bliss fi Beirut.”

295 SPC annual report (1883): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 80. The native teachers Ya‘qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr were subsequently dismissed. See Tibawi, “The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College,” 289.

must be identical with that of the American Presbyterian Mission,” asserted David Stuart Dodge, member of the Board of Trustees.<sup>296</sup> The college and the mission, which was in the meantime now in the hands of the Presbyterian Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (PBCFM), were once again at odds. Already in 1863, missionaries involved in the establishment of the SPC had argued in favor of hiring only instructors who had accepted the Protestant faith.<sup>297</sup> Introduction of this clause twenty years later indicated a change of course, and a departure from liberalism at the college. After their dismissal in 1883, Ya‘qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr published several critical articles about the SPC and its approaches to teaching. Particularly after the events of 1882 and 1883, the editors of *al-Muqtataf* were convinced that the college had failed to meet its original goal:

All our high schools in Egypt and Syria boast of such religious freedom except the school which is foremost among them, for it has abandoned its policy ... turned away from its original purpose of spreading learning and sought to impose a particular creed on its pupils.<sup>298</sup>

The decision against using Arabic as the language of instruction also met with great criticism:

Some foreigners who come to spread learning in the Near East had abandoned the system of teaching through the medium of its languages. For they wanted to save themselves the effort of study and of writing books, and to safeguard for themselves, generation after generation, the teaching posts ... as a preliminary to the enhancement of the prestige of the state for which they desire to establish at least some moral influence, since language is a pillar of state.<sup>299</sup>

Religious restrictions for faculty were ultimately lifted when Howard Bliss, son of Daniel Bliss, assumed the college’s presidency in 1902.<sup>300</sup> Despite Sarruf’s and Nimr’s disagreements with the college, they remained convinced that the SPC was one of the most important institutions of higher education throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>301</sup> In 1890, they became the first Syrians to receive honorary doctorates from the college.<sup>302</sup>

In 1920, the SPC was reorganized as a university and was henceforth known as the American University of Beirut. The university departed from its missionary origins, developing into an institution that is known today for independent thought and the promotion of tolerance for others.<sup>303</sup>

296 Dodge to Bliss (Watch Hill, August 21, 1882): AA.2.3.1.4.3.

297 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 274. The same practice was followed at the ABCFM mission schools. After Anderson’s trip to the Levant in 1843/44, he asked that only Protestant Christians be allowed to teach in the schools. See Anderson, *Report to the Prudential Committee*, 29. The measure resulted in several school closings because there were no longer enough teachers.

298 *Al-Muqtataf* 9 (1884/85), translated and cited in Tibawi, “The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College,” 289.

299 *Ibid.*

300 Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East*, 29.

301 Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 71.

302 *Ibid.*, 74.

303 B. Anderson, *The American University of Beirut*, 5. American University of Beirut, Mission Statement, accessed July 2012, <http://www.aub.edu.lb/main/about/Pages/mission>.

6. “This field it seems to me to be unwise in us to forsake”<sup>304</sup>.  
 Hopes, disappointments, and differences of opinion in the Syria Mission

During the nineteenth century, the ABCFM covered the territory of the Near East with several mission stations. William Goodell had some success in Armenia, Jonas King worked in Greece, Eli Smith and Gray Otis Dwight traveled to present-day Iraq, and Justin Perkins and Mr. and Mrs. Grant missionized to the Nestorians in “Urumia” (present-day Urmia in Iran).<sup>305</sup> Yet none of the mission stations were an unqualified success; they all lacked funds and new applicants from home.<sup>306</sup> From this perspective, the enthusiastic and hopeful reports that continued to run in the *Missionary Herald* – even in the last year of the ABCFM-administered Syria Mission<sup>307</sup> – seem almost delusional. There was an altogether different tone in Rufus Anderson’s correspondence (“Our mission in Syria has not yet made a fair experiment of what a mission can do”<sup>308</sup>), and in the missionaries’ letters marked “confident” or “private,” which discussed internal problems openly. On one hand, Anderson tried to dampen some of the missionaries’ enthusiasm for school construction, Arabic book printing, and other cultural projects. On the other hand, the missionaries stationed in Syria were not always of one mind on issues such as the construction of native churches. The same was true of the ABCFM’s mission strategy, which changed over the decades. In 1810, one could still read in the *Panoplist*, the predecessor to the *Missionary Herald*, that “it is education which forms the Mohommetan [*sic*] and Pagan, the Jew and Christian. . . . The savage and the man of civilized society are formed by education.”<sup>309</sup> Along with the first foreign mission in Bombay, which included an initiative to establish free schools, there was growing sentiment in the United States and the ABCFM that schools were a necessary part of overseas mission work. Subsequent experiences abroad, however, led to the ABCFM to rethink this position: “The early missionary practice of taking science and civilization as companions to their religion not only proved to be the most troublesome and expensive but also the least productive.”<sup>310</sup>

304 Anderson to the Syria Mission (On board the Turkish steamer, April 23, 1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.

305 The mission in Urumia was likewise turned over the Presbyterian Board in 1870.

306 The costs of mission work in western Asia increased significantly after 1830. By 1860, the ABCFM was dedicating 45 percent of its budget and personnel to its missions in the Middle East. See Perry, “The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the London Missionary Society,” 275. There were frequent calls in the *Missionary Herald* for applicants to become missionaries in the Levant. MH 43 (1847), in: ROS 4, 15–16; MH 51 (1855), in: ROS 4, 229: “But for means, for instruments, for laborers, we look imploringly to that loved land which we have left. We want *men*, MEN, MEN!”

307 MH 66 (1870), in: ROS 5, 347: “There is hardly a mission of the Board which has had a more checkered history; but the real promise of the field was never, probably, greater than now.”

308 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, October 22, 1842): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.

309 ABCFM, *The Panoplist*, 517.

310 Lindsay, *Nineteenth Century American Schools in the Levant*, 50, 54, 153. Jessup still held this position at the end of the nineteenth century, although the PBCFM did become more involved in education: “Education is only a means to an end in Christian missions, and we do not hesitate to say that such a mission has stepped out of the Christian and missionary sphere [that] aim[s]

In New England and other mission circles, the emerging consensus was that mission schools were an unnecessary expense for already costly foreign missions.<sup>311</sup> Education seemed to fall from favor.<sup>312</sup> Anderson's calls to focus on conversion work, using schools as sites to preach to children and parents, grew louder by the 1840s. In 1856 the ABCFM declared that "civilization is not conversion!"<sup>313</sup> The single goal was now to gather converts in native Protestant churches, to be led by native pastors.<sup>314</sup>

When the Beirut mission seminary had to close because of a lack of students in 1842, Anderson seized the opportunity to state that "if your pupils in the Seminary are a constant annoyance and cost more oblique [?] and opposition than they are at present worth, dispense with the Seminary."<sup>315</sup>

The mission press, and also the elaborate translation projects, represented a threat to the mission's success, taking up time that could otherwise be spent converting natives:

I ought perhaps to say, that the labors of this mission, as a whole, seemed . . . to have been somewhat less adapted than was desirable to excite religious feeling among the people. So far as there was this defect, (and the brethren freely admitted its existence,) it has been in part owing to the absorbing demands of the press on some of the brethren, and of education on others; and in parts, it may be, to habits of preaching and laboring that arose under past unfavorable states of the field and of the mission.<sup>316</sup>

Anderson did not want Beirut to become a simple "book-making station," or 'Abeih to become a mere "educating station."<sup>317</sup> Book printing and schools were no longer seen as an essential foundation for converting the population. Attitudes differed in Beirut, however, as is evident in these comments from Smith's first wife Sarah:

Respecting the success of our labors, I would say, that with our press, schools, preaching, conversation, and other social intercourse, in which we are busy from morning till night, we feel

to have the best astronomers, geologists, botanists, surgeons and physicians in the realm for the sake of the scientific prestige and world-wide reputation." See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 592.

311 Harris, *Nothing but Christ*, 39, 55.

312 Only at the end of the nineteenth century did Western missionary societies reconsider this position anew. Christianization remained the goal, but education was the lever that set the process in motion. "What could be higher than western civilization? Western education was the ladder which led up to influence, affluence, and general enlightenment," See Bonk, *The Theory and Practice of Missionary Identification*, 161–62.

313 ABCFM, *The Divine Instrumentality for the World's Conversion* (Boston, 1856), 4, cited in Lindsay, *Nineteenth Century American Schools in the Levant*, 154. Likewise in 1856, the Prudential Committee published its *Outlines of Missionary Policy*, which stated: "Missions are instituted for the spread of a scriptural, self-propagating Christianity. This is their only aim. Civilization, as an end, they never attempt; still they are the most successful of all civilizing agencies." Cited in Harris, *Nothing but Christ*, 149.

314 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, June 27, 1850): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 13 (HHL).

315 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, October 22, 1842): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.

316 Anderson, *Report to the Prudential Committee*, 26.

317 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, November 6, 1851): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 15 (HHL).

that a broad foundation is being laid, upon which, at some future day – God knows when – a glorious superstructure will be raised.<sup>318</sup>

But there had to be some evidence of success before the distant future. Shortly before Anderson's trip to the Levant in 1843/44, the American Board and some young missionaries in Syria were uncertain whether the Syria Mission could continue to exist. While the senior missionaries in Beirut remained convinced of the mission's ultimate success, their younger colleagues were completely disillusioned.<sup>319</sup> On November 5, 1842, Eli Smith wrote to Anderson: "Let me beg you with tears on behalf of the dying souls around me ... not to give up your hopes of this mission."<sup>320</sup> After his visit to Syria, Anderson seemed impressed by the land and people and gave the mission a second chance.<sup>321</sup> However, his hopes were disappointed. He returned to the Levant in 1855, to repeat what the missionaries presumably did not want to hear: "The governing object of every mission and of every missionary should not be to liberate, to educate, to enlighten, to polish, but *convert* men."<sup>322</sup>

Selflessness, philanthropy, edification, and enlightenment alone were not enough to advance the mission, according to the corresponding secretary.<sup>323</sup> For missionaries like Calhoun, De Forest, Smith, and Van Dyck, who were deeply engaged in educational initiatives, these criticisms were no doubt difficult to hear. Anderson was not interested in the immediate signs of progress that came from teaching and disseminating books, but rather in benefits for eternity. Charitable donors might be satisfied for now, but "they will soon grow weary of the repeated calls made upon their benevolence."<sup>324</sup>

What the missionaries, their wives, and female assistants achieved in Syria cannot be expressed in numbers of converts. The influence of the missionaries' educational institutions on generations of young Syrians is readily apparent, although this did not fulfill the mission's actual goal.<sup>325</sup> So was the mission a success? In

318 Hooker, *Memoir of Mrs. Sarah Lanman Smith*, 323. According to Anderson, many missionaries believed that educational work was just as important as preaching. See *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 263.

319 In 1842, Elias Beadle asked Anderson's permission to leave the mission. See Anderson to Smith (Boston, October 24, 1842): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 5 (HHL). Samuel Wolcott and Leander Thompson were just as dissatisfied and left Beirut in 1843, after reporting to Anderson on the hopelessness of the mission. See Wolcott to Anderson (Beirut, June 1, 1842): ABC 16.5., Vol. 3: "The present state of our whole field ... is one which sinks into unimportance." See also Badr, "Mission to 'Nominal Christians,'" 225–26.

320 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, November 5, 1842): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (157).

321 Anderson to the Syria Mission (On board the Turkish steamer, April 23, 1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.

322 ABCFM, Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Syrian Mission, 9. With respect to the boys' and girls' seminaries, Anderson asserted: "They are *not* mere educational establishments; the mission should not regard them as such, nor the Board support them as such ..." Their purpose was not to educate, "but to *make wise unto salvation*": Ibid., 11–12.

323 ABCFM, Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Syrian Mission, 10.

324 Ibid., 11.

325 Khalaf, *Cultural Resistance*, 134: "Much of what they did, indeed the very location of field stations and specific outcomes of their labours was largely unintended, by-products of both

1870, the American Board had no choice but to emphasize the successes within the mission's failure:

There are the *results of labors hitherto put forth* – the converts gathered into churches, the communities of Protestants formed, the schools established, the books printed, the knowledge diffused, the prejudices broken, the broad deep foundations laid of civilization, science and religion, during forty-eight years of labor.<sup>326</sup>

The following sections will test the validity of a Druze sheikh's assessment of the mission, which appeared in the *Missionary Herald* in 1870: "The American missionaries alone had done more good in this land, by educating and civilizing the people, than Greeks, Catholics, Maronites and Druzes all together."<sup>327</sup>

## I.2. PROCESSES OF CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY SYRIA

Beirut was at once the product, the object, and the project of imperial and urban politics of difference. Overlapping European, Ottoman, and local civilizing missions competed in the political fields of administration, infrastructure, urban planning, public health, education, public morality, journalism, and architecture.<sup>328</sup>

### 1. Important political developments

In 1516, the province of Syria was overtaken by the Ottomans and divided into different administrative territories (*vilāya*). The Damascus *vilāya* included the cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Beirut, Mount Lebanon, as well as the Beqaa Valley in what is eastern Lebanon today. Local governors held power within Lebanon, including the reformist Druze prince Emir Bashir II, who ruled between 1794 and 1840. He converted to Maronite Christianity and supported a judicial system that was independent of religious leaders and feudal lords. Because of internal unrest, Emir Bashir II fled to the Ottoman province of Egypt at the end of the 1820s. He formed an alliance with the Egyptian governor Muhammad 'Ali, whose son Ibrahim attacked Ottoman armies in Palestine in order to secure Egyptian independence in 1831, pressing on towards Syria in 1832. Despite military occupation, the region entered a period of economic and cultural prosperity that resembled conditions in Egyptian society.<sup>329</sup> Eli Smith wrote in 1833: "And to their effect doubtless, in part,

their good intentions and their considerable ignorance of the areas they were seeking to evangelize."

326 MH 66 (1870), in: ROS 5, 256.

327 MH 55 (1859), in: ROS 4, 346.

328 Hanssen, "*Fin de siècle*" *Beirut*, 4.

329 As a result of Napoleon's Egyptian campaign (1798–1801), France exerted a great influence on the cultural development of Egypt, particularly during the reign of Muhammad 'Ali. The effects were not felt in Syria until the Egyptian occupation of the 1830s. See Faris, "Amirika wa l-Nahda al-'Arabiyya al-Haditha," 380.

is to be ascribed the tolerance of religious discussion under that government . . . . The extension of Egyptian rule over Syria has undoubtedly given these increased facilities for missionary operations.”<sup>330</sup>

Ibrahim strengthened local administration, rooted out corruption, introduced local assemblies in large and small cities, promoted religious tolerance between Muslims and Christians, and encouraged industrialization. Expansion of the Beirut port increased the region’s silk exports.<sup>331</sup> Nevertheless, the Syrian population also suffered under Egyptian occupation. High taxes, obligatory military service, the regime’s adherence to feudal structures, and its intervention in confessional feuds through the supply of arms led Maronites, Druzes, as well as Shi’a and Sunni Muslims to rebel against Muhammad ‘Ali and his son Ibrahim in 1840.<sup>332</sup> Through an alliance with Istanbul, which was also supported by England and Austria, the port of Beirut was attacked and the Egyptian troops were forced to retreat.<sup>333</sup> The Ottoman government, however, could no longer stave off reforms that had been initiated by the Egyptians.<sup>334</sup>

Through Austrian influence, Mount Lebanon was ultimately divided into two political units (*qā’immaqāmīya*), promising the Druzes and Maronites each a certain degree of self-government.<sup>335</sup> On one hand, the uneven distribution of economic and political power across the two administrative territories paved the way for a political system that was defined by confession. It also led to a growing number of conflicts between Druzes and Maronites. Numerous violent rebellions in the 1840s and 1850s culminated in the civil war of 1860.<sup>336</sup> At the height of this conflict, there were Druze massacres of Christians in Mount Lebanon and Damascus.<sup>337</sup> The year 1860 became a political, social, and cultural turning point for the region. With the support of the European powers, the two *qā’immaqāmīya* were merged into one administrative territory (*mutassarīfīya*) with limited authority within the Ottoman Empire. This paved the way for Lebanese autonomy, since the region now had its

330 Smith, *Missionary Sermons and Addresses*, 216.

331 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 12.

332 Eli Smith recounted in 1833: “The cradle of civilization is now the abode of oppression, poverty, and wretchedness. . . . We hear much of the improvements of Mohammed Ali, but all are intended to increase his power and his income, none for the benefit of his people.” See his *Missionary Sermons and Addresses*, 26–27.

333 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 12–13.

334 Jandora, “Buṭrus al-Bustānī,” 12.

335 Druzes and Maronites were each allotted one representative (*wakīl*) at the Sublime Porte. See Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 16.

336 These included conflicts between the Druzes and Maronites in 1842 and 1845. See MH 38 (1842), in: ROS 3, 324–325; MH 41 (1845), in: ROS 3, 442–443. Tensions between the two religious groups were further stoked by the Ottoman government, which sought to break up the power of the Maronites and the Druzes in order to further its own policies of centralization and Ottomanization. See Hitti, *Syria: A Short History*, 226.

Renewed Maronite attacks on Druze villages were the immediate cause of the 1860 civil war. Assisted by England and the Ottoman government, the Druzes retaliated heavily. See Richter, *Allgemeine Evangelische Missionsgeschichte*, 115.

337 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 32–35. More on the events of 1860 in: Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*.

own judicial and executive authorities.<sup>338</sup> The *mutassarifiyya* was headed by an administrative council with twelve members (seven Christians, and five Muslims and Druzes),<sup>339</sup> reducing the involvement of clerics in regional politics.<sup>340</sup> This contributed significantly to the increased acceptance of new religious groups (such as the Protestants) and their political legitimacy. Social and economic liberalization, growth in the agricultural sector, and a doubling in the price of land characterized this period in Mount Lebanon.<sup>341</sup> The new administrative system could not, however, eliminate feuding between the confessions.

The Egyptians' withdrawal brought comprehensive political changes to the Ottoman Empire, particularly the period of reforms known as *Tanzimat*, beginning in 1839. This period can be understood as a final attempt of the Empire to halt the erosion of its power, and to meet expectations that had raised by the European states.<sup>342</sup> As a result of these reforms, the unequal treatment of non-Muslim religious communities came to an end. Among other new laws, the right to religious freedom was guaranteed for all. Within this context, two edicts in particular are worth emphasizing. Together they abolished the millet system,<sup>343</sup> which had been in place since the Early Middle Ages, encouraging the acceptance of Syria's new Protestant community. In 1839, the *Hatt-ı Sherif* (Noble Edict) of Gülhane granted protection of life and property to all citizens of Empire,<sup>344</sup> and the *Hatt-ı Hümayün* (Imperial Edict) took effect in 1856, granting all citizens rights as Ottoman subjects. Equal recognition meant that members of all ethnic and religious groups could participate in government and military service, from which the *millet* had previously been excluded.<sup>345</sup> This applied to Protestants as well, who had received *millet* status just

338 Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, 32–33.

339 Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 43.

340 For Jessup (*Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 218), the new administration was a harbinger of greater prosperity within Syria: "A stable, free, and virtually independent government was established in Lebanon. This was politically and socially the greatest boon to Syria in modern times. It is the freest, most peaceful and prosperous province in the empire, and is envied by the other provinces. It opened the way for the vigorous and industrious people to improve their property without fear of armed horsemen, tithe gatherers, extortioners and bribe-taking officials. No longer do mercenary judges and arbitrary rulers intimidate witnesses and corrupt the tribunals."

341 Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, 442–44.

342 Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 80: "The *Tanzimat* era was a period of negotiation between the Ottoman Porte and his subjects (and amongst the subjects) to navigate and delineate the ever-shifting distributions of political power." See also Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, 30.

343 Each *millet* (religious group) was administered by its respective religious leader, who held legal authority over marriage, divorce, inheritance, and other personal matters. See Yazigi, "American Presbyterian Mission Schools in Lebanon," 13; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 109.

344 Tibawi, *A Modern History of Syria*, 95.

345 *Ibid.*, 177. Already in 1853, Sultan Abdulmejid wrote to the *wakīl* of the Protestants that "it [is] ... the heart of my wishes ... that all classes of my subjects should enjoy full protection, and that especially with respect to religious matters, as has always been the practice, they should not encounter any challenges ... I have made it my responsibility to uphold the special allowances that I have granted to my loyal Protestant subjects with respect to confessional and cultural matters." See "Neue Verordnung des Sultân 'Abdulmeğîd seiner protestantischen Unterthanen," ZDMG 9 (1855): 844–46.

six years earlier, with the assistance of British diplomacy. Now they, too, enjoyed equal status with all citizens of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>346</sup>

## 2. The emergence of an educated middle class in Beirut

Under Muhammad 'Ali and his son Ibrahim, Beirut became the center of the Egyptian government in occupied Syria, replacing Damascus and Acre as provincial centers of the Bilād al-Shām. Structural improvements such as port and street renovations, and also a new sanitation system, substantially improved health and living conditions within Beirut.<sup>347</sup> These conditions led to a steady increase of the city's population. Particularly Christians, who often worked in import and export markets, enjoyed success as international traders with the growth of European imports.<sup>348</sup> Many of them had attended mission schools and now worked as writers, office workers, or interpreters for foreign consulates. Others served as brokers between European investors and local retailers, since they were fluent in European languages as well as Arabic.<sup>349</sup> For the American mission, students drawn away from its schools – as in the case of the Beirut boys' seminary – meant a loss on years of investment. Political changes and the opening of the market transformed a once quiet Beirut to a bustling urban center, as the Americans reported: "Beirut was a comparatively quiet and retired place. It constantly changed for the worse by the increase of foreigners, sailors and soldiers, until the time of the English invasion, when every bad influence multiplied to an indefinite and most fatal degree."<sup>350</sup>

For the Syria Mission, Beirut became a secular but indispensable mission station, given its geopolitical position. Nevertheless, the graduates of missionary institutions contributed to Beirut's development. Many of the city's Christians represented the new, well-to-do middle class, whose demand for schools to educate their own children steadily increased.<sup>351</sup> The many bloody conflicts between Christians and Druzes, particularly in the years between 1840 and 1860, compelled Christian families to leave Mount Lebanon and the Chouf, a mostly Druze area to the southeast of Beirut. Between 1858 and 1863 the population of Beirut rose from

346 Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 86; Kawerau, *Amerika und die Orientalischen Kirchen*, 479–80.

347 Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 95. Even after the Egyptians' withdrawal, the Ottoman government strove "to perform and offer modern urban services," particularly because of the presence of Western missionaries. See Hanssen, "*Fin de siècle*" *Beirut*, 120–22 (here: 122).

348 Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, 39–41. Some traders had connections to the Protestant community or were even members of the Beirut congregation. See Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 97.

349 Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, 55–59.

350 ABCFM, Annual Report (1844), 133.

351 According to Hitti (*Syria: A Short History*, 231), Syria was previously a two-class society comprised of aristocrats, clerics, and large landowners on one hand, and farmers, handworkers, and the poor on the other.

fifty thousand to seventy thousand inhabitants,<sup>352</sup> in part because international aid programs offered medical and financial assistance to refugees within the city.<sup>353</sup> By 1860, the need for education was greater than ever before. The surge in demand for Western missionary as well as Ottoman schools was driven in part by the city's expanding economic infrastructure, which created demand for new professional skills and knowledge of foreign languages. It was also driven by the gradual collapse of tribal and feudal structures through the *mutassarifiyya*, which reduced religious leaders' influence over the members of their congregations.<sup>354</sup>

"Christian schools have multiplied, the Turkish schools for boys and even girls are crowded with pupils, newspapers are published and read, and there is friendly intercourse between Moslems, Christians and Jews."<sup>355</sup> Despite Jessup's positive assessment from the year 1860, the American mission missed opportunities in elementary education that arose in the postwar era. Sharp budget cuts meant that mission schools that had been forced to close during the civil war stayed closed thereafter.<sup>356</sup> The United States' own civil war, fought between the country's northern and southern states in the years 1861–1865, created massive budget gaps for the ABCFM missions: "No boarding-schools could be reopened – no new books published – no new missionaries sent out."<sup>357</sup> With the city's many Christian refugees, the Americans were unable to seize the opportunity to continue their evangelism. Many missionaries were active in aid programs that had been initiated by the Western powers, but they saw few opportunities to further their own cause.<sup>358</sup>

Into the vacuum, however, came British and German agencies which supplied relief and schools, indigenous elements made their own attempt, an independent American university was called into existence, and French Catholics found a fertile field in which society's appetite had been whetted by the influence of the French occupation.<sup>359</sup>

The soon-to-be-opened Syrian Protestant College gave the mission a renewed sense of purpose. The Americans certainly played a role in the social upheavals of the era. They worked together with the respected intellectuals of their time and engaged with members of Beirut's new educated middle class, within as well as outside the Syria Mission.

352 At the end of the nineteenth century, Beirut's population was around 120,000: Hitti, *Syria: A Short History*, 232.

353 Hanssen, "*Fin de siècle*" *Beirut*, 141. After 1860, British, American, and German missionaries took on the task of providing food, clothing, and medicine to the victims of war. A relief committee collected donations to fund assistance programs in the city and throughout the region. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 209, 213, and 251.

354 Lindsay, *Nineteenth Century American Schools in the Levant*, 172.

355 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 218.

356 Elsewhere, Jessup wrote: "November, 1861, was a period of great anxiety. The Board had cut off \$6,000 from our mission funds. We were all overworked. (*Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 239)

357 *Ibid.*, 213.

358 Lindsay, *Nineteenth Century American Schools in the Levant*, 175; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 234: "But the relief work we were engaged in Syria was a duty so high and pressing we had to choke down our eagerness to go home and do our share."

359 Lindsay, *Nineteenth Century American Schools in the Levant*, 180.

### 3. Schooling in the Ottoman Empire

In matters of schooling, the Ottoman Empire was by no means exceptional for its time. The nineteenth century was characterized by comprehensive public school systems, independent of religion – in North America, Europe, the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and later China as well.<sup>360</sup> One cannot assert, therefore, that indigenous initiatives for a solid elementary education would not have happened without the mission schools. The mission schools merely expedited them. There was, however, an imbalance in the Ottoman Empire between Christian institutions of education, which received support from Europe and North America, and Muslim schools, which lacked qualified teachers. This was compounded by resistance from the Muslim community (*'ulama*), which did not want to give up the system of Koran schools (*madrasa*).<sup>361</sup> The Ottoman government feared that it was lagging behind the Christians to an even greater degree.<sup>362</sup> Nevertheless, change came slowly from Istanbul. A public school law, notable for its promotion of secular education and reform of the Koran schools, was not introduced until 1869.<sup>363</sup> Educational reform, as a part of the *Tanzimat* reforms, was supposed to demonstrate to Europe that education and culture were a priority for the empire.<sup>364</sup> Unfortunately, the law was not implemented consistently in all provinces.<sup>365</sup>

Belief that education was a concern of the family and religious communities, not the state, remained dominant through the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>366</sup> In the first half of the century, foreign organizations<sup>367</sup> and native religious institutions opened numerous schools,<sup>368</sup> which were strongly oriented towards the European educa-

360 Deguilhem, "State Civil Education in Late Ottoman Damascus," 224.

361 Scholz, *Foreign Education and Indigenous Reaction*, 39.

362 Deguilhem, "State Civil Education in Late Ottoman Damascus," 229.

363 Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire*, 83: The school laws sought to remove elementary education from the hands of religious communities, placing it instead under the oversight of the state. These laws can be seen "as a part of the Ottomanist project by trying to integrate Muslim, non-Muslim and foreign schools within a legal framework, and to found government schools for non-Muslim communities."

364 Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire*, 17; Diab and Wählin, "The Geography of Education in Syria in 1882," 109: The laws proposed four types of schools: a four-year elementary education (*ibtidā'ī*), a military-style school (*rushdiyya*), as well as a preparatory school (*i'dādī*) for a more advanced education or high school (*sultānī*). Compared to traditional Koran schools (*kuṭṭāb* and *madrasa*), the curricula of these new schools were much more comprehensive. An elementary education included arithmetic, history, geography, and hygiene. In high school, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, civics, Turkish, French, and other languages were taught as well.

365 Cioeta, "Islamic Benevolent Societies and Public Education in Ottoman Syria," 42.

366 *Ibid.*, 40.

367 For example, the Lebanon schools that were supported by the Scots (see below), the schools founded by Quakers in Brummana, many different British-Syrian schools, the boarding schools of the Kaiserswerth deaconesses, the schools of the Church of Scotland, and also schools opened by individual missionaries. See Womack and Lindner, "'Pick up the pearls of knowledge,'" 130–31.

368 In his article "Education in Syria," the journalist Shahin Makarius compiled a list of schools that had been founded in the country's large and small cities. For Beirut, he named not only the

tional canon.<sup>369</sup> Protestant missionaries founded schools not only to promote literacy and to bring people closer to the Bible, but also to counteract the influence of Catholic missions, which were deemed just as unacceptable as the false faith of Eastern Christians. In many cases, a Jesuit school opened not far from an American mission school, or vice versa. This competitive behavior was clearly advantageous for the Syrian population.<sup>370</sup> Moreover, it gradually became apparent that the Americans hoped to achieve a kind of monopoly position in education – despite the fact that the ABCFM sought to limit involvement in the field. One example of this is the “Lebanon Schools” initiative of the Syrian brothers Sulayman and Elyas al-Salibi, along with the Englishman John Lowthian. Sulayman was a graduate of the ‘Abeih seminary; he had long harbored the desire to work as a missionary among his native people.<sup>371</sup> The Salibi brothers and Lowthian planned to open schools, particularly in remote villages in the country’s interior, that would offer children of all faiths an education without the intent of conversion.<sup>372</sup> In structure and content, the Lebanon schools closely resembled the American mission schools.<sup>373</sup> Favored materials included books that had been produced by the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Mission Press – including the Bible, the Westminster Assembly’s *Shorter Catechism*, and John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.<sup>374</sup> The Lebanon schools adopted geography, grammar, and arithmetic textbooks that were typical for the time, particularly those produced by the Americans, who allowed these schools to obtain them at half price.<sup>375</sup> The founders of the native schools initially hoped to receive organizational support from the American Syria Mission, which did not, however, want to assume responsibility for projects that lay outside its absolute control.<sup>376</sup> After Sulayman al-Salibi completed his studies at ‘Abeih, he turned down a preaching position at Acre in order to continue on as school director in Bhuwara, to the dismay of some missionaries.<sup>377</sup> The Salibi brothers established new schools particularly in areas where the missionaries were not present.<sup>378</sup> By

mission schools, but also a girls’ boarding school founded by the English, the Greek Orthodox *Zahrat al-Ihsan* (Flower of Mercy) school, the school founded by Greek Catholic patriarchs (in Arabic: *Baṭriyarkīya*) in 1865, the “School of Wisdom” established by Maronite patriarchs in 1874, as well as the public military *rushdīya* school. See “al-Ma‘arif fi Suriyya” (Education in Syria), *al-Muqtataf* 7 (1882/83), 389–90, cited and translated in Diab and Wāhlin, “The Geography of Education in Syria in 1882,” 117. Public schools were located in Tripoli, Sidon, and Tyre, as well as in the ‘Aqqar, Beqaa, and Marja‘yun regions. See Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East*, 407 (note 1).

369 In 1875, there was an elementary school in nearly every Christian village. See Cioeta, “Islamic Benevolent Societies and Public Education in Ottoman Syria,” 41.

370 Womack, “Lubnani, Libanais, Lebanese,” 14.

371 Abu-Husayn, “The ‘Lebanon Schools,’” 207.

372 *Ibid.*, 205.

373 *Ibid.*, 207.

374 *Ibid.*, 216–17.

375 Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, 137.

376 Smith to Young (Beirut, July 21, 1855): ABC 60 (105), (HHL).

377 Abu-Husayn, “The ‘Lebanon Schools,’” 208.

378 *Ibid.*, 214.

1867, there were already twenty-one schools.<sup>379</sup> In 1854, Lowthian and the Salibi brothers opened a high school in Souq al-Gharb; its reputation soon resembled that of the seminary in 'Abeih.<sup>380</sup> Despite their differences, a fruitful cooperation – although not always free of criticism – emerged between the Lebanon schools and the Syria Mission.<sup>381</sup> After the deaths of Lowthian and Sulayman al-Salibi, and Elyas al-Salibi's retirement from school affairs, a commission was formed in 1873 to advise on the schools' continued existence. Its participants included the Free Church of Scotland, the American missionaries, and SPC professors.<sup>382</sup> Schools without legal title to their land were closed, and two of the remaining school complexes were transferred to the Presbyterian mission in 1888 and 1900.<sup>383</sup> It is striking that the *Missionary Herald* only mentioned the Salibi schools a single time.<sup>384</sup> Apparently, even Syrian Protestant school initiatives were seen as competition. In an 1855 letter, Smith denied this suspicion, which had also been voiced by the English. He added that only the ABCFM was in the position to establish educational institutions that could stand the test of time. Smaller initiatives, like that of the Salibi brothers, might be quickly discouraged. According to Smith, the Syrian field of work was too small to be shared with other organizations.<sup>385</sup> Similar disagreements arose with the indigenous schools of Mikha'il 'Araman<sup>386</sup> and Butrus al-Bustani,<sup>387</sup> as will be discussed in the pages to come.

Particularly in the 1880s and 1890s, many public, Muslim-oriented schools in Syria began to challenge the missions' dominance in the field of education. These schools exclusively served the Muslim population; public schools for Christians did not exist in Syria until the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>388</sup> Two of only a few private Muslim school initiatives are particularly worth mentioning. At the National Islamic School in Tripoli (1845–1909), founded by Husayn al-Jisr, modern scientific

379 Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, 136.

380 *Ibid.*, 136.

381 Abu-Husayn, "The 'Lebanon Schools,'" 205, 210. More precise details cannot be gleaned from Eli Smith's letters to Cuthbert Young in England. Smith did not believe that Elyas, who was in England to collect donations, could be trusted. According to Smith, rumors had been started by the Salibis that did not correspond to the truth. Simeon Calhoun, director of the seminary in 'Abeih, declined to serve on the Lebanon Schools committee. See Smith to C. G. Young (Bhamdoun, September 22, 1854), (Beirut, July 21, 1855), and (Beirut, March 4, 1856): ABC 60 (105), (HHL). Letters to the editor from an unknown American journal suggested that were problems with Sulayman in particular. See ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (112).

382 Abu-Husayn, "The 'Lebanon Schools,'" 205, 210.

383 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 384: These included the buildings in Dhur al-Shweir and Souq al-Gharb. The Scots handed them over with the condition that the complexes would be used exclusively for missionary purposes.

384 MH 65 (1869), in: ROS 5, 229: "Dr. Post has preaching at his house every Sabbath, which is attended by about 40 ... half of this number are the boys of the school, the teacher of which is a Christian man, and takes a good deal of pains to teach the children aright. The school belongs to the Suleebas." See also Abu-Husayn, "The 'Lebanon Schools,'" 206.

385 Smith to Young (Beirut, July 21, 1855): ABC 60 (105), (HHL).

386 See chapter II, section 2.2.

387 See chapter III, section 1.3.

388 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 790.

subjects were taught in addition to religion and French. Newly written and translated works, including those by Cornelius Van Dyck,<sup>389</sup> were used at the school. In addition, the Islamic Society for Benevolent Purposes (*Jam'iyat al-Maqasid al-Khayriyya al-Islamiyya*)<sup>390</sup> was founded by Muslim reformers and intellectuals in 1878.<sup>391</sup> Its goal was to offer a modern education, in line with Ottoman reformist thought and conceptions of Islamic morality. The curricula of the society's four private schools in Beirut, Sidon, and Tripoli departed sharply from traditional Muslim schools and missionary institutions.<sup>392</sup> The society also emphasized schooling for girls, which was still frowned upon by many Muslims at this time.<sup>393</sup> In 1881, there were twenty-one modern Muslim elementary schools for boys (with approximately 2300 students), and seven schools for girls (with approximately 900 students).<sup>394</sup>

#### 4. Literary and scientific societies<sup>395</sup>

You will be interested to learn that we have a little Society of Arts and Sciences at Beirût. It was formed a year ago, and has now reached a position, which seems to promise its permanency, and gives us confidence to speak of it. It was formed in consequence of the urgent sollicitation [*sic*] of intelligent natives, chiefly young men, desirous of knowledge.<sup>396</sup>

Eli Smith shared these words with the German Oriental Society (*Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*, or DMG) in a February 12, 1848 letter. The DMG, which had been founded just three years earlier, published the letter in its journal soon thereafter. Orientalists in Europe and the United States greeted the news with enthusiasm – a scientific society in Syria!<sup>397</sup> Missionaries like William M. Thomson, Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck wanted to participate in an exchange of knowl-

389 More on Van Dyck's scholarly career in chapter II, section 2.4.

390 More on the society in Cioeta, "Islamic Benevolent Societies and Public Education in Ottoman Syria," 40–55.

391 Founding members included Husayn Bayhum (who had already worked closely with Butrus al-Bustani in years past, sharing his ideas on a Syrian-Arabic homeland), as well as Yusuf al-Asir, Van Dyck's assistant in translating the Arabic Bible. See Atiyeh, "The Book in the Modern Arab World," 240; Hanssen, "The Birth of an Education Quarter," 170.

392 Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, 140; Hanssen, "The Birth of an Education Quarter," 155; Womack, "Lubnani, Libanais, Lebanese," 13–14.

393 Hanssen, "The Birth of an Education Quarter," 155. The society, which financed schools through the donations of wealthy families, could not continue its work because of insufficient interest in education among the Muslim population. See Cioeta, "Islamic Benevolent Societies and Public Education in Ottoman Syria," 48.

394 According to 'Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani in the Muslim newspaper *Thamarat al-Funun*: see Cioeta, "Islamic Benevolent Societies and Public Education in Ottoman Syria," 50.

395 See also Zeuge, "Die 'Syrische Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften und Künste.'"

396 Fleischer, "Gesellschaft der Künste und Wissenschaften in Beirut," 378. The society's constitution, as well as a "Report of the committee formed in 1847 to investigate the library's status," were included with Eli Smith's letter. These were composed in Arabic by Nasif al-Yaziji and Tannus al-Haddad, and translated into German by Dr. Haarbrücker: *ibid.*, 379–84.

397 Hanssen, "*Fin de siècle*" *Beirut*, 5: Intellectual associations had existed before the nineteenth century, but they did not share the same form or transformative social influence as the scientific societies of this era.

edge at a more advanced level than was possible at the schools or mission house Bible circles. The *Al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun* (Syrian Society of Arts and Sciences) was established in 1847.<sup>398</sup> Its members included Americans and Europeans, as well as many Syrian intellectuals, including some who were involved with the Syria Mission.<sup>399</sup> It cannot be said for certain whether interest in such an association was first sparked by the missionaries or their Syrian friends. The following note can be found in a letter written from Beirut to the ABCFM administration in Boston in 1842:

Messrs. Van Dyck, L. Thompson and De Forest were appointed a Committee to take the preparatory steps for the formation of a Society for Scientific purposes. The Committee subsequently [?] and a Society was formed to the election of Mr. Smith as President, Mr. Wolcott as secretary and Van Dyck as treasurer.<sup>400</sup>

During the research for his 1938 study *The Arab Awakening*, the Lebanese historian George Antonius found an unpublished document in the NEST archive, dated April 21, 1842, which stated that Nasif al-Yaziji and Butrus al-Bustani proposed to establish an association of scholars, although no further details were provided.<sup>401</sup> It seems likely that impetus to found the Syrian Society came from the Americans as well as Syrians.<sup>402</sup> This has been confirmed by the journalist Shahin Makarius, who wrote in his 1883 article "Education in Syria": "Dr. Van Dyck was thinking of establishing a society to educate the young men of Syria. He cooperated with Rev. Thomson and teacher Butrus al-Bustani; and they established in Beirut in 1847 a society which they named 'The Syrian Society.'"<sup>403</sup> Rufus Anderson had only critical words for his missionaries' extraordinary initiative, which was already under discussion in 1842:

How will your society for scientific purposes operate as an example to other missions: and if such societies should be known to the churches to exist in the missions what would be the effect? A word to the wise: The thing has not attracted the attention of the Committee. I merely throw out these two queries for your consideration.<sup>404</sup>

The ABCFM secretary did not mention the scientific society again in his Syrian correspondence. This did not, however, appear to disrupt planning in Syria. One year before the founding of the Syrian Society, Bustani, Van Dyck, and others sought to

398 In its constitution, the society is titled *Jam'iyya Suriyya li-Iktisab al-'Ulum wa l-Funun* ("The Syrian Society for the Acquisition of the Arts and Sciences"): Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 19. The society's members, and scholars who later wrote about the society, have tended to use the shorter title named above.

399 Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 18; Butrus al-Bustani, Salim Nawfal, Elyas Fawaz, 'Abdallah al-Witwat, Nasif al-Yaziji, John Wortabet, Mikha'il 'Araman. For more on these individuals, see appendix II.

400 In: "The following proceedings of the General Meeting have been ordered to be sent to the Prudential Committee" (Beirut, April 24, 1842): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (27).

401 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 51. I could not, however, locate this document in the course of my archival research.

402 Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, 149.

403 S. Makarius, "al-Ma'arif fi Suriyya," (Education in Syria), *al-Muqtataf* 7 (1882/83): 387, translated and cited in: Diab and Wählin, "The Geography of Education in Syria in 1882," 116.

404 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, October 22, 1842): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1.

establish a scientific society in 'Abeih called the *Majma'at al-Tahdhib* (Society for Education). In a letter dated January 10, 1846, Bustani wrote to Smith that, as the head of this society, he hoped "that it would serve the evangelical cause."<sup>405</sup> The letter contained a list of members as well as a detailed constitution.<sup>406</sup> According to its second point, the goal of the association was "to nurture the spirit and to acquire useful knowledge."<sup>407</sup> Except for an indication that the acceptability of slaveholding was debated at the first meeting, nothing more is known about the work of the *Majma'at al-Tahdhib*.<sup>408</sup> 'Abeih was, however, a small town. Bustani and Van Dyck had trouble finding enough participants for their scholarly circle.<sup>409</sup> This may be one reason why the society lasted for only a short time, reorganized as the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences in Beirut in 1847.<sup>410</sup>

The Syrian Society presumably took some inspiration from the Oriental societies of Europe and America. The American Oriental Society (1842), Syro-Egyptian Society (1844), and German Oriental Society (1845) listed goals in their constitutions that resembled those of the Beirut society, founded just a few years later: 1. Promoting the study of Middle Eastern cultures and languages, 2. Creating and collecting literature on the history, philology, culture, and archaeology of the Middle East, and 3. Establishing a library that was accessible to all who were interested in these topics.<sup>411</sup> The German Oriental Society greeted the newest arrival in the circle of scientific societies as the "firstborn son of the spirit of Occidental scientific societies in western Asia."<sup>412</sup> Existing contacts between some of the missionaries and the Oriental societies in Europe and America could now be expanded. In his "annual discourse" for the year 1852, the second president of the Syrian Society, Eli Smith, emphasized the importance of communication between the individual societies, "so that one reaps what another has sown, and is not obliged to spend time in repeating experiments already tried; and, consequently, begins where his companions have left off, with a view to making new acquisitions."<sup>413</sup>

405 Tibawi, "The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani," 161.

406 In the introduction to *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, Khuri briefly introduces the society and its constitution. At this time, Bustani and Van Dyck directed the seminary in 'Abeih.

407 Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 5.

408 Bustani to Smith (Beirut, January 10, 1846): ABC 50, cited in: Tibawi, "The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani," 161.

409 Makarius, "al-Ma'arif fi Suriyya," 387.

410 Nasif al-Yaziji, Butrus al-Bustani, John Wortabet, Gregory (or Krikur) Wortabet, Henry De Forest, Cornelius Van Dyck, Tannus al-Haddad, and Elyas Fawaz all belonged to this association, and to the Syrian Society that was founded one year later. See Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 5–6.

411 See "Constitution of the American Oriental Society, Adopted April 7, 1843," in: JAOS 1 (1843), vi – viii; "Syro-Egyptian Society": ABC 60 (144), (HHL); DMG (1846), 143–44; Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 19–21.

412 "Die Gesellschaft der Künste und Wissenschaften in Beirut," in: ZDMG 2 (1848): 379. This phrasing shows that the short-lived *Majma'at al-Tahdhib* was unknown outside of Syria.

413 E. Smith, "Khutba al-Ra'is al-Sanawiyya Sana 1852" (Annual Speech of the President for 1852), translated in: Salisbury, "II. Syrian Society of Arts and Sciences," 479.

The Syrian Society hoped to facilitate the spread of current developments in the arts and sciences throughout the Arab world. At the time of the society's founding, Syria had just begun to connect to a global network of knowledge. It would take another decade for newspapers to establish their presence in this region (see below). Connections with the other Oriental societies allowed the Beirut society to enhance its library's collection of Arabic literature. These included publications of the American Mission Press, but also books from Europe, where an interest in re-printing works of classical Arabic literature had recently emerged.<sup>414</sup> Many of these works had been brought to Europe in manuscript form centuries ago; now they returned as bound volumes. In his speech before the members of the Syrian Society, Eli Smith identified two paths for awakening "a general desire for attainments in the sciences, and acquisitions of knowledge" within Syria. "First, by public discourses, to which we admit, as hearers, all who wish to be present." The other means was "the printing of our Transactions, a publication made up of papers read and discourses delivered, from time to time, at our meetings."<sup>415</sup> The long history "engraved on [Syria's] rocks and walls, and buried in her mountains and hills" was now to be brought to light, encouraging greater interest among the native population.<sup>416</sup>

The members of the Syrian Society met once a month, and they held lectures every two weeks that were open not just to Society members, but to the general public (as Eli Smith mentioned).<sup>417</sup> These lectures, which attracted growing attention, frequently dealt with historic approaches towards knowledge in Syria, as well as with the necessity of reforming a culture of knowledge across all social classes – for men *and* women.<sup>418</sup> There were lectures on the latest developments in the natural sciences,<sup>419</sup> as well as on literary<sup>420</sup> and historical<sup>421</sup> themes.

In 1854, the Society counted forty-two members, including four American missionaries and four foreign businessmen.<sup>422</sup> They created a platform for pure, scholarly exchange between East and West. In light of the problems that arose in the Americans' dealings with the Syrian Protestant schools, as well as with native helpers who qualified to become pastors, it is remarkable that within the Society's framework, Americans and Syrians could discuss scientific and cultural topics on an equal footing. The

414 Ibid., 25.

415 Salisbury, "II. Syrian Society of Arts and Sciences," 482.

416 Ibid., 480.

417 Smith to the DMG (Bhamdoun, August 16, 1852), in: ZDMG 7 (1853): 108: "In the past winter our regular meetings were not so well attended, but the public lectures attracted far more listeners than before."

418 The following lectures are found in Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li-l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*: C. Van Dyck, "Fi Ladhat al-'Ilm wa Fawa'idih" (On the Delights and Utilities of Science), 25–32; J. Wortabet, "Miḡdar Ziyadat al-'Ilm fi Suriyya fi Hadha l-Jil wa 'Ilaluha" (The Measure of the Progress of Knowledge in Syria, at the Present Time, and its Causes), 33–34; B. Bustani, "Khitab fi Ta'alim al-Nisa'" (A Discourse on the Instruction of Women), 45–54.

419 See B. Bustani, "Iktashafat Jadid" (New Discoveries), in: *ibid.*, 25; S. Naufal, "Fi Usul al-Shara'i' al-Tabi'iyya" (On the Principles of the Laws of Nature), in: *ibid.*, 36–44.

420 See B. Bustani, "al-Hariri," in: *ibid.*, 77–78; N. al-Yaziji, "Qasida fi Wada' Wilyam Ṭumsun" (A Poem in Praise of Mr. William Thomson), in: *ibid.*, 83–84.

421 J. Zawin, "Khutba fi Tarikh Suriyya" (Lecture on the History of Syria), in: *ibid.*, 181–83.

422 Ibid., 18.

list of lectures does not indicate an exclusive emphasis on the history of scholarship in Europe or United States. In fact, topics associated with Arab culture were often a central concern. With an eye to developments in the West, Syrian and American lecturers alike argued that scientific and scholarly progress was necessary for Syria.<sup>423</sup> The Society's members agreed that the Arabic language was the most important medium for transmitting new (or forgotten) knowledge, since the Society's foremost purpose was to serve Syrian, rather than Western, interests.<sup>424</sup> However, Arabic vocabulary at this time was not always equipped to describe the latest scientific discoveries. According to Van Dyck, the language lacked specialized terminology:

[This is not] because of countless deficiencies and errors in the language. Rather, it is the result of insufficient use; the language has not kept up with progress in the arts and sciences. Now we must introduce Western terminology that was borrowed from other languages, primarily from the Greek.<sup>425</sup>

With respect to cultural heritage, the Society's members sought not only to reform the Arabic language in order to meet modern demands, but also to revive the literature and knowledge of centuries past.<sup>426</sup> In no case did Eli Smith, or his colleagues Cornelius Van Dyck and William Thomson, assume the role of Occidental missionaries who saw the experiences of their homeland as the only viable path for reviving an Arabic culture of knowledge within Syria. Even though the Society had no Muslim members, Eli Smith emphasized that religious orientation should not play an important role in its work – a significant departure from the mission schools and the later SPC.<sup>427</sup> Issues should be discussed factually and neutrally, Smith said, without bringing religious convictions into the argument:

423 Wortabet, "The Measure of the Progress of Knowledge," translated in: Salisbury, "II: Syrian Society of Arts and Sciences," 486: "Another era is opening for Syria,—an era of light. True, it is but the first break of day, after all, and that only partaking of the darkness of a long night; yet must it be sunrise ere we awake? Since the dawn has at length appeared, let us rise and bestir ourselves. Already, have many opportunities been lost; and there is much for us to do, before we reach the goal."

424 Y. Q. al-Khuri, "Muqadimma. Al-Hayat al-Fikriyya fi l-Qarn al-Tasi' 'Ashir fi l-Diyar al-Shamiyya" (Introduction. Intellectual Life in Nineteenth-Century Syria), *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 12.

425 Van Dyck, "Fi Ladhat al-'Ilm wa Fawa'idih," in: *ibid.*, 32.

426 Smith, "Khutba al-Ra'is al-Sanawiyya," translated in: Salisbury, *Syrian Society of Arts and Sciences*, 480 (see also Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 24). "As for your language, although no works composed in it, which are extant, reach far back into antiquity, is it not found to be nearly related to the languages of certain other works which have come down to us from ancient times, and to which, therefore, some very subtle, linguistic investigations attach themselves,—so that your language sometimes illustrates what is most obscure in these dead languages? We say, then, that it is quite within your range, to copy a rock-inscription, or to describe a ruin, or to interpret some book, or phrase, in your printed Transactions; and however little your own countrymen may think of such things, they certainly make accessions to knowledge which are appreciated in foreign countries."

427 On the Christian orientation of both the Syrian Society and the Jesuit society founded in 1850, Antonius writes that "religious prejudice was still dominant, and the Moslems and Druzes had stood out. The fact that these societies were founded under the auspices of missionaries had made them still more unpalatable to the non-Christian elements." (*The Arab Awakening*, 53)

I have no need to remind you who know our rules of proceeding, that we are forbidden by our Constitution to interfere, in any respect, as members of this Society, with those religious opinions by which the various parties of the inhabitants of this city are distinguished from one another. But I charge you to hold fast, most earnestly, to this principle, for the sake of love and harmony in all our meetings; so that all those who are fond of the sciences and of acquisitions of knowledge, to whatever religious sect they belong, may be present without compromise of opinion, and finding here a common ground, may grasp hands as brothers in one great cause.<sup>428</sup>

It seems likely that Smith was referring to past debates in which religion had become a point of contention. In this highly noteworthy statement, Smith pulled apart the unity of faith and science that was so often emphasized by the missionaries. His words further suggest a certain cultural sensitivity, as confessional disagreements had led to warlike conflicts in Mount Lebanon on multiple occasions. Nevertheless, outside observers suspected that the Society, although “purely scientific,” might actually favor Protestantism.<sup>429</sup> To Smith’s regret, the rumor had resulted in “two other societies, formed in opposition to us by the Greeks and Catholics,” luring away some of the Syrian Society’s members.<sup>430</sup>

In 1852, while the Society was still active, Butrus al-Bustani published a volume of eighteen selected lectures from its meetings.<sup>431</sup> That same year, the Society ceased its activities. From an 1856 letter, written by Smith to the German professor and Orientalist Rödiger, it is evident that the Society had not been formally dissolved:

I regret to write that our Literary Society has not published anything except for the first issue of its proceedings, and that it has not held meetings in a long time. Since Mr. Thomson is gone and I can’t devote much time to this because of my unsteady health, there isn’t anyone else who would like to take up the cause.<sup>432</sup>

Considering Smith’s workload with the mission press and Bible translation, Shahin Makarius’s assessment from 1883 was hardly surprising: the Society gradually fell apart as Smith’s enthusiasm dwindled. Van Dyck attempted to cover the most

428 Smith, “Khutba al-Ra’is al-Sanawiyya,” translated in: Salisbury, *Syrian Society of Arts and Sciences*, 482. See also Khuri, *A’mal al-Jam’iyya al-Suriyya li l-’Ulum wa l-Funun*, 25.

429 Smith to the DMG (Bḥamdoun, August 16, 1852), in: ZDMG 7 (1853): 108.

430 Ibid. The Catholic society was the *Al-Jam’iyya al-Sharqiyya* (Oriental Society), founded by Jesuits in 1850. It is unclear which society was associated with the “Greeks.”

431 An additional volume was planned but never realized. See Smith, “Khutba al-Ra’is al-Sanawiyya,” in: Khuri, *A’mal al-Jam’iyya al-Suriyya li l-’Ulum wa l-Funun*, 24. According to ABCFM sources, a certain Mrs. Ebenezer Burgess planned to provide the Syrian Society with a printing press for its own publications. The press would belong to the mission, but it would be managed by two missionaries and three Syrians. The “Burgess Press” was to be financially self-supporting and used only by the Syrian Society. See “Conditions on which Mrs. Ebenezer Burgess gives a Press to the Syrian Society at Beirut Feb. 7, 1851”: ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 14 (HHL). Since Bustani’s book was published by the American Mission Press and the Syrian Society ceased to operate soon thereafter, the Burgess Press never came to fruition. The initiative was, however, an indication that in the United States there was a lively interest in the activities of Smith and others outside the mission.

432 Smith to Prof. Rödiger (Beirut, May 7, 1856), in: ZDMG 10 (1856): 820. This letter was published in German.

important duties, but his engagement with the mission seminary in 'Abeih was so time-intensive that he, too, could not keep the Society afloat.<sup>433</sup>

Except for the lectures published by Bustani, nothing more is known or has been written about any of the proceedings at the Society's fifty-three meetings. The degree to which members may have discussed Syria's future, or reform of the educational sector, is likewise unknown. The original intent was to "publish the lectures and discussions as tracts (*rasā'il*) and newsletters (*akhbār*)."<sup>434</sup> The missionaries' official reports to the ABCFM – and the responses they received from Boston – do not mention the work of a scientific society at all, despite some of the missionaries' significant contributions. This shows that the Syrian Society stood outside the ABCFM's field of interest, but it also underscores the private engagement of Americans living in Syria on behalf of the cultural interests of their native colleagues and friends.

Other scientific and literary circles, with similar goals, followed the Syrian Society's example in subsequent decades. Already in 1850, the Jesuit Father de Prunieres founded the *Al-Jam'iyya al-Sharqiyya* (Oriental Society), which was only open to Christians. Its membership was likewise composed of both Syrians and foreigners, and it organized lectures for every meeting. There are just as few written records from this society, which seems to have lasted only until 1852.<sup>435</sup> Confessional boundaries were first overcome by the *Jam'iyat al-'Ilmiyya al-Suriyya* (Syrian Scientific Society); its members included Christians, Druzes, and Muslims. This society was active in two different time periods (from 1857 to around 1860, and from 1868 to 1869). It had to stop its work in 1860 because of the civil war, and only in 1869 did it receive new approval from the Ottoman government.<sup>436</sup> Teachers from Bustani's National School, established in 1862, were particularly active during the society's second phase. Muhammad Amin Arslan served as president, and Bustani and the Muslim reformer Husayn Bayhoum were association directors.<sup>437</sup> The society soon boasted more than 150 members, hailing from Beirut, Damascus, and other Syrian cities, as well as from Istanbul and Egypt.<sup>438</sup> It was involved in fields as diverse as Syrian archaeology, Greek philosophy, and the translation of European non-fiction. "In sum," states historian JENS HANSEN, "the Syrian Sci-

433 Makarius, "al-Ma'arif fi Suriyya," 387.

434 Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 125.

435 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 52–53.

436 Raffoul, "Butrus al-Bustani's Contribution to Translation," 149. Historians like Antonius (*The Arab Awakening*, 53), Hanssen ("*Fin de siècle*" *Beirut*, 169), and Tibawi (*A Modern History of Syria*, 160) erroneously speak of separate societies, each with a distinct period of activity. However, in 1883 the journalists Ya'qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr recalled that Bustani was a member of the first and second *Jam'iyat al-'Ilmiyya al-Suriyya*. See "Al-marhum al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustani," 5. Zachs also refers to one society with two different periods of activity (*The Making of a Syrian Identity*, 52). In 1990, Yusuf Qasma Khuri compiled the second society's lectures in *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-'Ilmiyya al-Suriyya, 1868–1869*.

437 Hanssen, "The Birth of an Education Quarter," 153.

438 Zaydan, *Tarikh Adab al-Lugha al-'Arabiyya, al-Jiz'a al-Rabi'*, 69–70; Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-'Ilmiyya al-Suriyya*, 218–19. Khalil al-Khuri, Mikha'il Mishaqa, Salim al-Bustani, and John Wortabet were also members.

entific Society engaged in an antiquity-referential discourse of their society and a Western-referential discourse of progress, modernity, and civilization.”<sup>439</sup> According to ABDUL LATIF TIBAWI, this society’s influence on Arabic society was greater than all of its predecessors: “[It] stressed the historic contributions of the Arabs to arts and sciences and urged their descendants to emulate them in the establishment of schools and learned societies.”<sup>440</sup> Despite its notable work, the Syrian Scientific Society, like so many others, soon dissolved.<sup>441</sup> Because of dwindling interest and insufficient financial support, most societies lasted only for a short time.<sup>442</sup> Others rose to take their place and likewise made important contributions to the *nahḍa*, the cultural awakening that began in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>443</sup>

### 5. Syria’s *nahḍa*: A bridge between past and future

Economic growth, new social structures, a period of peaceful coexistence beginning with the *mutassarifiyya*,<sup>444</sup> and the equal recognition of Christians and Muslims in the Ottoman Empire through the *Hatt-ı Hümayūn* law<sup>445</sup>—all this influenced cultural development, particularly in western Syria. With a growing school system and expanding communications through trade, newspapers, and books, broad cultural changes could no longer be halted in Syria or Egypt. Beirut and Cairo became centers of literature and science. The missionaries’ earlier observations were correct – Syria’s cultural potential lay dormant,<sup>446</sup> but this changed rapidly during the *nahḍa*. *Nahḍa* means “awakening” or “revival,” and is sometimes trans-

439 Hanssen, “*Fin de siècle*” *Beirut*, 169.

440 Tibawi, *A Modern History of Syria*, 160.

441 In 1875, former members of the Syrian Scientific Society – including Faris Nimr, Ibrahim al-Yaziji, Ya’qub Sarruf, and Shahin Makarius – established the secret *Jam’iyya Suriyya* (Syrian Society). Its goal was to hasten the separation of Syria and Lebanon from the Ottoman Empire, a response to the desire for greater liberty. See Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 84; Raffoul, “Butrus al-Bustani’s Contribution to Translation,” 150.

442 In 1869, society member Salim Farij noted that many other societies no longer existed. “For it is easy for all of us to meet at the beginning of the matter, but we find it less easy to keep the obligations of these meetings. . . . I hope that this society’s path will not be like earlier ones that have fallen”: translated and cited in Holt, “Narrative and Reading Public in 1870s Beirut,” 42.

443 A significant example is *Jam’iyat al-Funun* (Society of Arts, 1875), which attracted former (particularly Sunni) members of the *Jam’iyat al-’Ilmiyya al-Suriyya*, including Yusuf al-Asir (see appendix II, no. 3). ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani (who was once a student of Bustani) and Yusuf al-Asir (Van Dyck’s collaborator in the Arabic translation of the Bible) were editors of the Sunni society’s journal, *Thamarat al-Funun* (Fruits of Art): Hanssen, “*Fin de siècle*” *Beirut*, 169–70. See also Zaydan, *Tarikh Adab al-Lughā al-’Arabīyya, al-Jiz’a al-Rabī’*, 70–76.

444 Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, 116.

445 Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 76.

446 Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, 36: “The creative use of the classical Arabic language had almost entirely ceased. The old authors were scarcely read; such poetry and prose as were produced were imitations of archaic models; except for religious schools, which mainly confined themselves to the memorization of the Quran, no sort of literary education existed.”

lated as “renaissance.”<sup>447</sup> It involved a renewed interest in cultural heritage, as well as the transition to a modern Arab society, according to Western models.<sup>448</sup> The *nahḍa* should not be seen as a response to Western influence, but rather as the result of ongoing exchange between East and West.<sup>449</sup> The movement began around the middle of the nineteenth century. For historian JAN DAYA, the founding of the aforementioned *Majmaʿat al-Tahdhib* in 1846 marked the start of Syria’s cultural awakening.<sup>450</sup> Clearly, many different events played a role, as Jurji Zaydan himself witnessed firsthand:<sup>451</sup> the founding of modern schools, the development of print media, literary and scientific societies, access to public libraries<sup>452</sup> and museums, as well as the introduction of previously unknown literary and dramatic works.<sup>453</sup> This new cultural energy was accompanied by the formation of an intellectual elite, as well as calls for allegiance to an Arab homeland (*waṭan*) that was not dependent on Istanbul.<sup>454</sup> Themes such as the responsibility of citizens for the well-being of their country, patriotism, openness to modern ideas, the emancipation and education of women, as well as the question of individual identity<sup>455</sup> all played a central role.<sup>456</sup> At a meeting of the *Jamʿiyat al-ʿIlmiyya al-Suriyya* in 1868, the young author Ibrahim al-Yaziji, son of Nasif al-Yaziji,<sup>457</sup> quoted from the poem of an

447 Tomiche, “Nahḍa,” 900: The term “renaissance” is contentious in that it recalls the sixteenth-century European Renaissance, thereby defining the *nahḍa* in European terms. Among Arab scholars, the translation “awakening” is considered more appropriate. See also Philipp, *Ḡurḡī Zaidān*, 7.

448 Tomiche, “Nahḍa,” 901.

449 S. Abou, *Le bilinguisme arabe-français au Liban*, Paris, 1962, 176, in: Scholz, *Foreign Education and Indigenous Reaction*, 13. See also Conrad, “Enlightenment in Global History,” 999–1027: The assumption that the Enlightenment expanded outward from Europe is no longer favored in contemporary scholarship. “Enlightenment” and “civilization” are used almost interchangeably in non-European societies. Enlightened, or culturally transformative, processes were the result of globalized trade and reformist thought in politically unstable regions. This also applies, as described above, to processes of change in the Ottoman Empire.

450 Daya, “Ilmaniyu Bilad al-Sham al-Muslimun fi ʿAsr al-Nahḍa.”

451 Zaydan, *Tarikh Adab al-Lughā al-ʿArabiyya, al-Jizʿa al-Rabiʿ*, 14–16.

452 Until this time, libraries existed only in monasteries or in private households.

453 Author and journalist Salim al-Bustani, son of Butrus al-Bustani, had a formative influence on the development of the novel in Arabic literature. The protagonists in his Western-style novels criticized despotism and stood for the civilized values of knowledge and rational thought. See Tomiche, “Nahḍa,” 902; Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 65.

454 Syrian patriotism of the mid-nineteenth century had a strong Arab orientation, for Christians and Muslims alike. Syria defined itself not only as a separate territorial entity from the Ottoman Empire, but also a separate historic entity. Only after the First World War did the nationalist movement – particularly the Islamic pan-Arab movement – truly mature. See Rabinovich, “Syria and the Syrian Land,” 44. For more on the Syrian Arab national movement, see Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*; and Sheehi, *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity*.

455 Sheehi, *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity*, 5–6: “The process of redefining identity vis-à-vis a torrent of local and global changes is not exclusive to the cultures and societies of South West Asia. Similar activities were occurring throughout much of the world in the like-minded reform, independence, and literary movements of colonial India, Iran, Philippines, China, and Meiji Japan.”

456 Hanssen, “*Fin de siècle*” *Beirut*, 6.

457 For more on Nasif al-Yaziji, see appendix II, no. 75.

anonymous Arab author: “Arise, O Arabs, from sleep awake! Knee-deep we’ve sunk in misery’s lake.”<sup>458</sup>

Flexibility and versatility in the Arabic language was essential for further cultural development. Arabic vocabulary was expanded through new terminology, and some words received new meanings.<sup>459</sup> A simplification of syntax was needed to enhance comprehension. Some words were borrowed from the vernacular, but the distinctively poetic rhetoric of the Arabic language was retained. These linguistic reforms encouraged a more accurate depiction of scientific concepts, and also the development of novels and plays as new literary forms.<sup>460</sup> Newspapers and journals played a much larger role in the *nahḍa* than books. The novelty of these print media attracted attention, as did their efficiency in spreading news and other useful information.<sup>461</sup> Christian entrepreneurs, in particular, were among the first publishers of Arabic newspapers in Syria – one consequence of the equal rights that the *Hatt-ı Hümayün* law granted to Christians.<sup>462</sup> Many of them had attended missionary schools or worked for the American mission. Khalil al-Khuri, who worked as a teacher in ‘Abeih in the 1860s, began to publish the first Syrian newspaper in 1858. Called the *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* (Garden of News, 1858–1911), it fundamentally reinvented the model of the Arabic newspaper and ended Egypt’s domination of the press.<sup>463</sup> It was the first independent (not state-run) newspaper in Syria that was allowed to be printed outside of Istanbul.<sup>464</sup> Al-Khuri’s initial plan, to print the newspaper at the American Mission Press, was left unrealized for unknown reasons. He eventually founded his own press (*al-Matba‘a al-Suriyya*), which adopted the American typeface that became so influential in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>465</sup> Butrus al-Bustani and his son Salim also published well-known journals,

458 Translated and cited by Hitti in *Syria: A Short History*, 477. Hitti writes that “the political awakening, with the urge to throw off the Ottoman yoke, was a natural sequence to the intellectual awakening.” See also Tibawi, “Some Misconceptions about the Nahda,” 18.

459 Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, 477; Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, 72–73: *waṭan* began to refer to a distinct Syrian homeland within the Ottoman Empire. Words like *waṭanīyya* (nationalism), *umma* (nation, instead of “religious community”), and *tamaddun* (civilization) were frequently used in public speeches and the press. More on these terms in chapter III, sections 1.4 and 1.5.

460 Tomiche, “Nahḍa,” 901–2.

461 Glaß, *Der Muqataṭaf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 6. In addition, newspapers were frequently read aloud in coffee houses and at home.

462 Glaß, *Der Muqataṭaf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 76. On the development of the press in Egypt, see Zaydan, *Tarikh Adab al-Lughā al-‘Arabiyya, al-Jiz‘a al-Rabi‘*, 52–54. Elshakry, “The Gospel of Science and American Evangelism,” 198: “Beirut soon became the centre of the print revolution in the Arab lands: twenty-five periodicals, for example, were founded there between 1852 and 1880, compared with thirteen in Cairo and ten in Alexandria.”

463 Glaß, “Von *Mir‘āt al-Aḥwāl* zu *Tamarāt al-Funūn*,” 30; Zachs, “Building a Cultural Identity,” 29.

464 Zaydan, *Tarikh Adab al-Lughā al-‘Arabiyya, al-Jiz‘a al-Rabi‘*, 51–52; Glaß, “Von *Mir‘āt al-Aḥwāl* zu *Tamarāt al-Funūn*,” 37–42; Glaß, *Der Muqataṭaf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 9–10: At that time, private Arabic journals were more comprehensive than state newspapers.

465 Khalil al-Khuri to Eli Smith (June 9, 1856): ABC 50, Box 3 (HHL); Glaß, *Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut Again*, 27–28; Glaß, “Von *Mir‘āt al-Aḥwāl* zu *Tamarāt al-Funūn*,” 37; Glaß and Roper, “Arabischer Buch- und Zeitungsdruck,” 193–94.

including *al-Jinan* (The Gardens) and *al-Janna* (The Little Garden), beginning in 1870. Together with their cousin Sulayman Bustani, they published the newspaper *al-Junayna* (The Garden), which appeared four times a week, beginning in 1871.<sup>466</sup> Ya'qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr, Syrian instructors at the SPC, founded the popular scientific journal *al-Muqtataf* (The Selected) in 1876; its title was inspired by Cornelius Van Dyck. The authors hoped "that this journal will meet with the approval of the public and will encourage the reader to acquire scientific knowledge and to strengthen industry."<sup>467</sup> Van Dyck supported the Syrians' project by initiating the journal's printing at the American Mission Press, and also by helping to obtain the necessary permissions from the Ottoman administration.<sup>468</sup> The American mission itself played an important role in the history of Arabic journals; Eli Smith oversaw the first printed Arabic periodical anywhere in Syria. Together with a team of translators and authors, he published six issues of *Majmu' Fawa'id* (Collected Useful Lessons) between 1851 and 1856. The journal featured stories with a religious message, as well as articles on popular scientific topics.<sup>469</sup> In 1863, the Syria Mission brought out another publication, called *Akhbar 'an Intishar al-Injil fi Amakin Mukhtalifa* (News About Spreading the Gospel in Different Locations), which resembled the *Majmu' Fawa'id* and other American religious periodicals. After 1868, it appeared monthly under the new title *al-Nashra al-Shahriyya* (Monthly Bulletin); after 1871, it appeared weekly as *al-Nashra al-Usubiyya* (Weekly bulletin).<sup>470</sup>

Censorship of the press increased during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909), much to the disadvantage of the Ottoman Empire's Christian citizens.<sup>471</sup> Beirut remained an exception until 1888, because Khalil al-Khuri (a former teacher at the 'Abeih seminary and publisher of *Hadiqat al-Akhbar*) took a very moderate stance as censor (*maktūbjī*).<sup>472</sup> His successors were less understanding, halting the publication of critical newspapers and journals like *al-Muqtataf*. Many Syrian intellectuals, including Sarruf and Nimr, moved to Egypt, where they could continue to publish their periodicals in a more liberal environment.<sup>473</sup> The mission's periodicals were also subject to censorship. Any statements about the prophet

466 Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East*, 34–36; Glaß, *Der Muqtataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 135–39. See also chapter III, section 1.4.

467 This is Elshakry's translation ("The Gospel of Science and American Evangelism," 200) from the introduction to *al-Muqtataf* 1 (1876): 1.

468 Elshakry, "The Gospel of Science and American Evangelism," 201.

469 More in chapter II, section 1.5.

470 See also chapter II, section 2.5.

471 Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, 213.

472 Atiyeh, "The Book in the Modern Arab World," 241; Glaß, *Der Muqtataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 90: Al-Khuri was known for issuing more warnings than prohibitions. His reputation was apparently not uncontroversial, however, as a remark from Daniel Bliss reveals. When Yusuf al-Asir (who assisted Van Dyck with the Bible translation) was recommended for the censor position in 1873, Bliss commented that "a Mohammedan is far better than that miserable renegade of a so-called Christian." See Bliss to his wife Abby (August 13, 1873), in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 48.

473 More on censorship and the reestablishment of newspapers in Egypt in Glaß, *Der Muqtataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 90–95. Freedom of the press in Egypt was guaranteed through British influence: Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, 477.

Muhammad or sultans of the Ottoman Empire were forbidden, as was the depiction of maps that might contradict Ottoman policy. This affected all books imported from abroad, as well as those published by the mission press in Beirut. Before going to print, a manuscript first had to be sent to Istanbul for approval and corrections; it might be rejected entirely.<sup>474</sup> In 1873, a polemical text by the Syrian Catholic priest Sabunji against the Maronite bishop touched off a scandal.<sup>475</sup> Because the American Mission Press had printed the book on commission,<sup>476</sup> the pasha responsible for the region fined the press and ordered it to close for one month. Van Dyck, who directed the press at this time, asked the pasha to bring the matter to the American consulate for resolution, and the pasha agreed. After communicating with the consul, Van Dyck issued a five-point statement explaining that the mission press always followed the law of the land, but that it did not assume responsibility for literature that it printed on commission for private individuals. The press, Van Dyck stated, belonged to five large English and American societies “and ... we could not take the responsibility of closing it.”<sup>477</sup> Political conditions in the country did not make the mission’s work easier. Yet because of the missionaries’ popularity and the good reputation of their institutions, they also enjoyed a certain security.

#### 6. What role did American missionaries play in Syria’s *nahḍa*?

The degree to which American missionaries contributed to Syria’s *nahḍa* has been the subject of much discussion, eliciting positive – but also critical – responses from scholars. There is no clear consensus on whether the mission schools and press provided the foundation for the region’s cultural and political transformations,<sup>478</sup> or whether instead their contribution ought to be relativized, since the missionaries pursued a purely Christian goal and did not intend to promote liberal, secular trends in a multireligious context.<sup>479</sup> In my view, the answer lies somewhere between both positions, since the American missionaries responded to Arab culture in very different ways. Conservative representatives of the ABCFM argued that “we do not

474 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 434.

475 The pamphlet was a response from Sabunji to the Maronite bishop’s verbal attacks against the Syrian Catholic church. Sabunji questioned the sainthood of Yuhanna Marun, the founder of the Maronite church. Sabunji’s text had not initially caused a stir, but after it was printed as a pamphlet, the Maronites directed their anger at the American Mission Press. The chain of events greatly enhanced the popularity of Sabunji’s polemical text. See “A Missionary Press Closed,” *New York Times*, July 12, 1874, 4: AA.7.1./American Mission Press Beirut.

476 As described in section 1 of this chapter, private individuals could pay to have their books printed by the American Mission Press.

477 Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (March 16, 1874), in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 225; Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (March 18, 1874), in: *ibid.*, 226.

478 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 43, 54; Faris, “Amirika wa l-Nahda al-‘Arabiyya al-Haditha,” 386–95; Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, 116.

479 Makdisi, “Rethinking American missionaries,” 209–11. Tibawi (“Some Misconceptions about the Nahda,” 16) opposes the view that missionaries, through the mission schools and press, made a major contribution to the *nahḍa* and rediscovery of the Arabic literary heritage.

find ... that Christ or his Apostles made any inventions or discoveries in the arts and sciences, or sought directly to promote literature.” From this perspective, the ABCFM could not be a “society for promoting civilization, or literature, or the arts.”<sup>480</sup> Missionaries like Smith, Van Dyck, and Thomson, on the other hand, were actively involved in the promotion of Arab culture and valued it deeply. They participated in scientific circles and worked to modernize the Arabic language – Smith by translating the Bible into Arabic, and Van Dyck by authoring countless textbooks.

Missionary institutions that educated authors, scholars, and journalists, and also the literary and scientific societies initiated by Americans and Syrians, were part of a movement that had begun with the Middle East’s opening to the West and the gradual decline of Ottoman hegemony. Although Boston did not always agree, the Syria Mission contributed to this movement and worked to address shortcomings in the field of education. The Americans did not define the *nahḍa*, nor did they play an insignificant role. Christian contemporaries such as Shahin Makarius (1853–1910) and Jurji Zaydan (1861–1914) held the Syria Mission in high esteem. Makarius’s study of education in nineteenth-century Syria begins with the missionaries and their schools. Syria’s backwardness and decay “did not vanish before the arrival of the foreigners, who gave new life to the remnants of her [Syria’s] science, and supported by the civil rule her printing presses and schools multiplied and her publishing increased.”<sup>481</sup>

Zaydan believed that foreign missionaries provided essential support to Syria’s *nahḍa*.<sup>482</sup> Neither of these men had an immediate connection to the Syria Mission, but their positive assessment of its work is readily apparent. The missionaries accorded themselves a key role in Syria’s cultural awakening:

It is the unanimous testimony of intelligent natives of all sects that the intellectual awakening of modern Syria is due, in the first instance, to the schools of the American missionaries. They were the first and have continued for over sixty years, and most of the institutions now in existence in Syria, native and foreign, have grown out of them or have been directly occasioned by them.<sup>483</sup>

Decades later, participants in the Syria Mission remained convinced that a new Syrian people and a new Syria would arise not through political upheavals or economic changes, but rather through “the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”<sup>484</sup> This vision was not realized, as the following four biographies demonstrate. These four individuals were closely associated with processes of cultural transformation in Syria, although their greatest successes had little to do with proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

480 ABCFM, Annual Report 1856, 64.

481 Makarius, “al-Ma’arif fi Suriyya” (Education in Syria), in: *al-Muqtataf* 7 (1882/83): 385, translated and cited in: Diab and Wählin (1983), “The Geography of Education in Syria in 1882,” 115.

482 Zaydan, *Tarikh adab al-lughā al-‘arabiyya, al-jiz’ā al-rabi’*, 52: “wa qad ra’ayt ‘an nahḍa Suriyya al-‘ilmīyya kān al-‘āmil al-akbar fīha jamā’at al-mubashirīn al-ajānīb.” See also Zaydan, *Tarajim mashahir al-sharq fi l-qarn at-tasi’ ashar*, 422: “Anhum bila khilāfīn min akbarun da’ā’imun haḍḍhihi l-nahḍa al-‘ilmīyya.”

483 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 594.

484 *Ibid.*, 783.

## CHAPTER II

### MISSIONARIES AS CULTURAL BROKERS

Through their contacts with unfamiliar cultures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Protestant and Catholic missions acted as cultural brokers<sup>1</sup> – or as MAKDISI writes, as “avatars of modern science, technology, and spirituality” and “apostles of progress.”<sup>2</sup> Mission stations were “*Kontakträume*” (contact zones),<sup>3</sup> or “in-between spaces,”<sup>4</sup> that served as a kind of interface between Western/European thought and indigenous cultures. Getting to know native culture as closely as possible was a part of the missionaries’ daily routine, allowing them to develop the means and strategies for their missionary work. Generations of foreign missionaries promoted the exchange of knowledge in fields such as education, Western science, philology, medicine, and artisanal and technical skills; they also exported cultural achievements such as the piano.<sup>5</sup> The first missionary to use science as a means of spreading the message of Christianity was the Jesuit Matteo Ricci, who lived in China between 1583 and 1610. Ricci was proficient in astronomy, mathematics, and geography, and he translated numerous works into Chinese.<sup>6</sup> Science journalist MICHELA FONTANA writes: “He thought that if the Chinese accepted and admired Western sciences as part of Western culture, they could also be convinced to accept the Christian religion.”<sup>7</sup> In the two centuries thereafter, winning over natives through educational opportunities became a typical practice of Western missions.

1 Höh, Jaspert, and Oesterle, “Courts, Brokers and Brokerage,” 9.

2 Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 48.

3 Koschorke, “Weltmission, Globale Kommunikationsstrukturen,” 197.

4 Marten, “Re-Imagining ‘Metropole’ and ‘Periphery’ in Mission History,” 305.

5 Koschorke, “Weltmission, Globale Kommunikationsstrukturen,” 197. In Syria, missionaries introduced the potato (1827), the camera (1854), and kerosene and oil lamps (1865), as well as metal nails, sewing machines, and the cabinet organ. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 360–61.

Johannes Triebel, ed., *Der Missionar als Forscher: Beiträge christlicher Missionare zur Erforschung fremder Kulturen und Religionen*, *Missionswissenschaftliche Forschungen* 21 (Gütersloh, 1988) covers various aspects of missionary research, but not cultural transfer. On the research work of the Danish-Halle missionaries, see Liebau, *Geliebtes Europa – Ostindische Welt*.

6 Fontana, “Matteo Ricci and the Use of Science,” 24; Collani, “The Exchange of Knowledge between Europe and China by Missionaries,” 115; Ricci translated, for example, Euclid’s six books on geometry, and he wrote books on mathematics and arithmetic. See appendix I for Van Dyck’s book on the fundamentals of geometry (*Kitab fi l-Usul al-Handasiyya*). For more on the Jesuits’ educational accomplishments in 16th- and 17th-century China, see Collani, “The Exchange of Knowledge between Europe and China by Missionaries.”

7 Fontana, “Matteo Ricci and the Use of Science,” 27.

Missions defined themselves less according to concepts such as “sin” and “grace,” and more by the cultural phenomena of “progress” and “backwardness.”<sup>8</sup> Progress was possible only through education, and “knowledge” became a dominant theme.

The publication of missionary periodicals is another interesting aspect of the Protestant and Catholic missions’ work as cultural brokers in non-Western countries. In many cases, missionaries produced the first printed journals in English, and later in the indigenous languages as well.<sup>9</sup> As publishers of the mission periodicals *Majmu‘ Fawa‘id* and *Akhbar ‘an Intishar al-Injil fi Amakin Mukhtalifa* (and later *al-Nashra al-Usubu‘iyya*), Eli Smith and Van Dyck exerted a formative influence on the Syrian press, providing an important link between scriptographic and typographic presentations of Arabic works.<sup>10</sup> Similar examples can be found in many nineteenth-century British and American missions, including the first Chinese periodical, the *China Monthly Magazine* (*Cha-shi-su Mei-yue Tong-ji-zhuan*), first published by British Protestant missionaries in 1815.<sup>11</sup> American missionaries achieved a similar milestone in Thailand, with the *Bangkok Recorder* in 1844.<sup>12</sup> The Bulgarian-language *Zornitsa* (Daily Star), also under American leadership, was published in Istanbul between 1864 and 1871.<sup>13</sup>

Nearly all of the mission periodicals emphasized religious and inspirational texts. Newspapers were passed along within families and village communities, achieving wider circulation than a book (like the Bible). Because the few native preachers could not reach all remote areas in person, newspapers were often read aloud in the young Christian congregations in lieu of a sermon.<sup>14</sup> The increasingly diverse selection of topics in mission periodicals was supposed to appeal to men, women, and children. The standard repertoire included illustrated short stories, articles on science, as well as practical advice on health, family, and home.

Missionaries not only brought Western culture to their mission field; they also corresponded with scholars and other interested readers in their homeland. Beginning in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (and particularly in the nineteenth

8 Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 33.

9 Koschorke, “Weltmission, Globale Kommunikationsstrukturen,” 198. In 1840, the ABCFM mission in Urmia established a press that printed works in Persian, Turkish, and Aramaic. The PBCFM’s annual report of 1920 stated that “it has for years printed perhaps the most influential newspapers available in Syriac.” See PBCFM, Annual Report (1920), 305, cited in: Malick, *The American Mission Press*, 15.

10 The previously mentioned DFG research project, “Transatlantische Vernetzung von Institutionen des Wissens am Beispiel der Syria Mission des American Board,” will include a comprehensive study of the Syria Mission’s Arabic-language periodicals under the leadership of the American and Presbyterian Boards.

11 Zhang, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese Press*, 3.

12 Koschorke, “Weltmission, Globale Kommunikationsstrukturen,” 200.

13 Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 212: “The magazine advocated female education . . . and promoted the idea that educated women were essential to spiritual regeneration and national progress through their work as mothers and teachers.” For more on women’s education, see chapter I, section 1.2 and chapter III, section 1.5. The list of American missions’ native-language periodicals also includes the Armenian weekly newspaper *Avedaper*, as well as the Greek-Turkish newspaper *Angeliaphoros*. See PBCFM, *Centennial of the American Press*, 27.

14 PBCFM, *Centennial of the American Press*, 27.

century), scholars and professors who themselves were unable to travel increasingly turned to missionaries for information and help with field research. “Standardized questionnaires were a frequent method of assistance,” writes the historian REINHARDT WENDT.<sup>15</sup> Those who did not have direct contact with missionary societies or missionaries abroad could access missionary publications in the form of “published letters, journal articles, and individual studies.”<sup>16</sup> Likewise, missionaries received “equipment, literature, and other materials” through their contact to Western scholars.<sup>17</sup> Social anthropological observations in the missionaries’ publications were not neutral, but clearly oriented towards the ideological guidelines of the mission societies. The “other” culture was observed from a particular point of view. These works, along with information passed along by traders and other travelers, gradually changed Western views about the non-European world. According to WENDT, there was a “need for new patterns of interpretation and systems of classification,” in order to make sense of a world that had grown “more complex and difficult to comprehend as a result of European expansion.”<sup>18</sup>

The ABCFM supported the scholarly activities of American missionaries in Syria, insofar as these activities were useful for scholarly exchange with the United States. Pursuing an independent interest or study was even touted as a welcome change of pace from the arduous routine of mission life. After all, science and religion were two sides of the same coin, as the missionary Henry Harris Jessup wrote:<sup>19</sup>

I would cordially recommend to every young man going out as a missionary to study some branch of natural science. Let him pursue it in his missionary field as a means of recreation, mental invigoration, relief from the routine of regular duties, and a means of gaining enlarged ideas of the power, wisdom and goodness of God, who creates alike the Book of Nature and the Book of Revelation.<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, missionaries were expected to take on a variety of roles in which they had no formal training; they were preachers, counselors, school directors, teachers, printers, authors, translators, correspondents, researchers, and travel guides all at once.

Their erudition and general knowledge often set them apart from the people they encountered in Syria. In the United States, they had belonged to a well-educated elite, while most members of the Middle Eastern population were barely educated at all. There was a constant temptation to assume superiority over those who did not seem Christian or “civilized” enough. Seeing how this attitude prevented some missionaries from engaging socially with members of the other culture, the Syrian convert John Wortabet warned that “such persons have evidently mistaken their calling.” Missionaries endangered their work by presenting themselves as su-

15 Wendt, “Einleitung: Missionare als Reporter und Wissenschaftler,” 12.

16 Ibid.

17 Liebau, “Mission und Forschung,” in: *Geliebtes Europa – Ostindische Welt*, 161.

18 Wendt, “Einleitung: Missionare als Reporter und Wissenschaftler,” 14.

19 See also the introduction.

20 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 128.

perior to their converts. “This naturally engenders a spirit of jealousy and opposition among the native Protestants,” Wortabet continued.<sup>21</sup> As cultural brokers and messengers of Jesus Christ, missionaries had to act with a cultural sensitivity that had not been part of their training. Eli Smith and his colleague William Goodell began this difficult learning process at the beginning of the 1830s, eventually recognizing that their success depended on adjusting to the actual circumstances of people in Syria.<sup>22</sup>

Missionaries in the new contact zone, or “in-between” space, were confronted with two challenges. On one hand, they needed to immerse themselves in the foreign culture without losing sight of their goals as missionaries. On the other, they felt an increasing separation from their home culture, although they longed to go home. Missionaries, who were frequently honored as heroes in their home country,<sup>23</sup> had to learn how to find their way between two cultures, upholding their status as role models for Christians at home. The career of a foreign missionary was seen as a calling. It meant living each day in the spirit of selfless, Christian benevolence, leaving home to serve others, just as Jesus had done.<sup>24</sup> It was a calling that could be followed only through personal sacrifice. Missionaries lived apart from family and friends for years or even decades, usually in a difficult climate. With their advanced education, male missionaries would have been assured of successful careers at home. In the mission field, there were no chances for promotion, and compensation was modest.<sup>25</sup> The income provided by the mission societies often sufficed only to furnish a home and to provide for the missionary’s family. Expenses to travel back home were covered only by special request; an overseas journey to the mission field was often a one-way trip. Because of the high mortality rate for missionaries, particularly for wives and children, a certain readiness for self-sacrifice was expected of them – which also became a burden for family members back at home.<sup>26</sup> Once the missionaries had gotten to know their new environment, they were confronted with great responsibilities. The mission society expected quick success (“the calls for labours are so pressing and so constant”).<sup>27</sup> Mission doctors attested to the physical as well as mental ailments of the missionaries and their wives.<sup>28</sup> Correspondence with the American Board

21 Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 378.

22 See chapter II, section 1.2.

23 Tjelle, *Missionary Masculinity*, 10.

24 Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 156. See also 1 Corinthians 9:20–23.

25 Tjelle emphasizes that the missionaries’ masculinity was never called into question. Masculinity can assume different forms, dependent upon context and social interactions. See *Missionary Masculinity*, 1–2, 8, 149.

26 The first American missionaries in Syria and the Holy Land died after just a few years (Levi Parsons, 1820–22; Pliny Fisk, 1820–25). Some missionaries’ wives died from sickness or in childbirth, including Sarah L. Smith (1834–36), Eliza N. Thomson (April to July 1834), C. E. Wolcott (1840–41), and Maria W. C. Smith (1841–42). See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 797–98.

27 Van Dyck to Anderson (Sidon, September 30, 1852): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (327).

28 Van Dyck to Anderson (Sidon, February 17, 1853): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (328): “My wife ... is subject to frequent attacks of acute Neuralgia and has been so ever since we [?] find that damp,

reveals that almost all were stretched to their limits and frequently requested time off. In 1845, shortly before he received permission to travel to the United States, Eli Smith wrote to Anderson:

With my feeble health and delicate nerves ... I can no longer do the work that devolves upon me. ... The amount of work too has not been small. I have in my hands alone more than a hundred and forty sheets of letters and other documents written and received since the first of October. My mind needs unbending to a degree to which I find it impossible here to bring about. This alone is a sufficient reason for my retiring for a season.<sup>29</sup>

When the mission found itself in a difficult financial situation in 1861, Jessup reported that “we were all overworked. The great work of the mission, the translation of the Scriptures was in jeopardy. The health of Dr. Van Dyck was very precarious. He suffered from severe headaches, was thin and weak, and had serious effusion in his joints.”<sup>30</sup>

The following sections will demonstrate that the work of individual missionaries must be considered in order to form a comprehensive picture of the Syria Mission’s accomplishments, regardless of whether these were intended or not.<sup>31</sup> Pious Americans of very different characters met in the Syrian mission field. While some sought to affirm their prejudices about “inferior” cultures, others moved in a kind of border zone between loyalty to their homeland and growing sympathy with their host culture. Through their cultural sensitivity and diligent self-awareness, Eli Smith and Van Dyck accomplished a great deal. They experienced a kind of alienation from their own homeland, but the effects could be productive (Van Dyck: “I have become very much Syrianized”). Both Eli Smith and his younger colleague Cornelius Van Dyck opted decisively for a life in Syria, and not only because they felt called as Christian missionaries.<sup>32</sup>

leaky house, the first winter we spent in Abeih ...” On October 5, 1859, Van Dyck reported that in the case “of our Missionary sister Mrs. Jessup,” “the main symptom was the mental derangement.” Fierce disputes in the Jessups’ village contributed to her anxiety, and Van Dyck recommended that she return to the United States. *Ibid.*, 350.

29 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, January 28, 1845): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 3.1. (102). See also: Van Dyck to Anderson (Deir al-Qamar, August 6, 1841): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 2 (204); Van Dyck to Anderson (Sidon, September 30, 1852): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (327).

30 Jessup in 1861, in: *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 239.

31 Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, 290: “Every missionary was a world of himself, with his own character and understanding and should be examined as such.”

See also Reinhard Wendt: “‘Verse will eben der Hindu’: Ferdinand Kittels missionarische und philologische Arbeit zwischen Basler Konzepten und einheimischer Kultur, *Zeitschrift für Mission* 27, no. 1 (2001): 27–45. At the Basel Mission in India around the year 1870, Ferdinand Kittel discovered a passion for philology, devoting more and more time to his studies while intentionally neglecting his missionary work.

32 Smith wrote: “Here may my last days be spent,” in MH 39 (1843), in: ROS 3, 377. Before returning to Syria in 1867, Van Dyck wrote: “I have left my heart in Syria and thither I must return.” Cited in Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 108.

II. 1. “HERE MAY MY LAST DAYS BE SPENT”<sup>33</sup>: ELI SMITH (1801–1857)1. Biographical overview<sup>34</sup>

Eli Smith was born into a shoemaker’s family in Northford, Connecticut in 1801. He studied at Yale College until 1821,<sup>35</sup> worked as a teacher for two years in the American South,<sup>36</sup> and graduated from Andover Theological Seminary<sup>37</sup> in Boston in 1826.<sup>38</sup> He embarked upon his assignment for the Syria Mission on May 23, 1826. He first served as associate editor of the press on Malta, and he studied languages in Egypt as well as Beirut.<sup>39</sup> He left his post in Malta in 1829, accompanying his missionary colleague H. G. O. Dwight on a trip to Persia by way of Armenia and Georgia, in order to explore the possibilities of starting a mission among the Nestorians. The outcome of this trip was his two-volume *Missionary Researches in Armenia*, published in 1833. In 1838 and 1852, he undertook a similar project with Edward Robinson, a professor of Biblical literature from New York City, although the goals of this project were purely academic. Their travels in the Holy Land provided the basis for the three-volume *Biblical Researches in Palestine, and in the Adjacent Regions*.

In 1834, Smith opened a girls’ school with his first wife, the missionary Sarah Lanman Huntington Smith. That same year, he assumed the leadership of the American Mission Press in Beirut, dedicating himself to the publication of religious and non-fiction works in Arabic. The ABCFM commissioned him to work on a new Arabic translation of the Bible in 1844.

33 A quote from Smith in MH 39 (1843), in: ROS 3, 377.

34 In contrast to other missionaries in Syria (like Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons), the ABCFM did not publish Eli Smith’s memoirs after his death. According to Anderson (*History of the Missions of the American Board*, 324), Smith did not keep a diary and never intended to publish his memoirs.

35 Leavy, “The Making of a Missionary,” 30–31: Smith decided to become a missionary at Yale. His decision was strongly influenced by the biography of Henry Martyn (1781–1812), who served as a missionary in India and Persia.

36 Free Church of Scotland, “Dr. Eli Smith,” 237.

37 Dexter, “Eli Smith,” 80.

38 Smith received a doctorate from Williams College in 1850, although it is not known for which achievement. In a letter to Butrus al-Bustani, Smith briefly remarked: “I’m not deserving of any such title.” See Smith to Bustani (Bhamdoun, October 12, 1850): ABC 50 (HHL); Dexter, “Eli Smith,” 82.

39 “Obituary Notice of Rev. Eli Smith D.D.”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (227); Laurie and Jessup, “A Brief Chronicle of the Syria Mission”: ABC 88 (HHL); Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 53.



Figure 3: Rev. Eli Smith, D.D.

Difficult living conditions in Syria led to the early deaths of his first two wives, Sarah Lanman<sup>40</sup> und Maria Ward Chapin.<sup>41</sup> In 1847, he married Mehitable Simpkins

- 40 For a comprehensive portrait of Sarah Smith and the influence of women on American mission work in Syria, see Lindner, “‘Long, Long Will She Be Affectionately Remembered.’” Sarah died after only two years of marriage in 1836. See Hooker, *Memoir of Mrs. Sarah Lanman Smith*, 366. Since she did not have children, she took in the Syrian girl Rahil ‘Ata in 1834, so that Rahil could be raised according to Protestant principles. This was not an uncommon practice among mission families in Syria. See Hooker, *Memoir of Mrs. Sarah Lanman Smith*, 379–80; Lindner, “The Flexibility of Home,” 41–42. More on this in the introduction to chapter III.
- 41 “Obituary Notice”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (227). Maria died in 1842, after around one year of marriage. She left behind one child, who was entrusted to the care of the missionary wife Mrs.

Butler, with whom he had two daughters and four sons.<sup>42</sup> After a long illness, he died of stomach cancer<sup>43</sup> in Beirut on January 11, 1857, with his work on the Bible translation not yet complete. He is buried in the Anglo-American Cemetery in the Zoqaq al-Blat neighborhood of Beirut.<sup>44</sup> (Figure 3)

## 2. “The outstanding figure of the early Syrian mission”<sup>45</sup>

Smith was a leader, role model, and mentor to the first two generations of American missionaries in Syria. When he was just twenty years old, a pious but otherwise unremarkable student at Yale, he became interested in the biography of the Anglican priest Henry Martyn, who traveled to India and Persia as a chaplain for the British East India Company. As described by Margaret Leavy in her portrait of Smith’s years at Yale:

Martyn was a scholar of broad interests and a man of great sensibility. ... While serving as chaplain with the East India Company, he had translated the Bible into Hindustani, then, with the object of perfecting his Persian and Arabic for further translations, he traveled to Tabriz and Persia.<sup>46</sup>

Smith’s biography would later demonstrate numerous parallels with Martyn’s life.<sup>47</sup> Because of his linguistic talents, which he had already demonstrated at Yale and Andover,<sup>48</sup> the ABCFM sent him to the American press on Malta. Smith was sup-

De Forest. See Van Dyck, “Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission,” 17. Missionaries were not expected to raise their children alone. Eli Smith’s involvement in raising his half-orphaned child is unknown.

42 Dexter, “Eli Smith,” 82: One of his sons died in childhood. The other three sons pursued academic careers. Charles, the oldest, became a professor at Yale. Edward Robinson specialized in art, and Benjamin Eli edited the *Century Dictionary*. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 147.

43 Cornelius Van Dyck performed an autopsy after his death and discovered a tumor in his lower abdomen that was “nearly as large, as the egg of a goose.” See MH 53 (1857), in: ROS 4, 273.

44 “Obituary Notice”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (227). The cemetery was moved in the twentieth century and is now located near the Beirut National Museum. After his death, Smith’s wife Hetty returned to the United States with the children. See “Missionaries’ Children Returned to the United States, 1832–1881, Record of Grants, etc.”: ABC 77.8.2 (HHL), cited in: Lindner, “Rahil ‘Ata al-Bustani,” 58.

45 This is the assessment of author David H. Finnie (*Pioneers East*, 196).

46 Leavy, “The Making of a Missionary,” 33.

47 On a trip through Anatolia in 1830, Smith visited Martyn’s grave in Tokat: “Little did I think, – when, by reading the life of that excellent man in my senior year in college, I was first inclined to a missionary life, – that Providence would ever put it in my way to visit his tomb. ... I might be endowed with more of his spirit, so that, if my life be prolonged, it may be as usefully spent as his, if death await me, I may be as well prepared for it as he was.” See MH 26 (1830), in: ROS 2, 270.

48 A friend from his college years at Yale wrote that Smith was “a sagacious observer ... so diligent and thorough in study, so exact and methodical in his habits of thought, so clear in his conceptions, so retentive in his memory, so earnestly conscientious, so humble and simple in his self-consecration to the service of Christ.” See Free Church of Scotland, “Dr. Eli Smith,” 237.

posed to fill in for Daniel Temple, the press's director, when he traveled to France. When Temple's trip was postponed, Smith quickly grew bored.<sup>49</sup> Without the approval of Temple or the ABCFM, he left for Beirut at the end of 1826, in order to learn Arabic.<sup>50</sup> He spent the winter in Beirut with the Syrian mission teacher Tannus al-Haddad and his wife. In 1828, the ABCFM urged him to return to Malta, where he was needed because the American press had at last received an Arabic typeface from England (see below). But Smith did not feel sufficiently prepared to supervise the printing of Arabic literature. He wrote that his premature involvement on Malta could hinder the quality of the Arabic works:

I consider it that a broad foundation be laid under the best circumstances to qualify me to issue judicious, well adapted, and accurate publications that I look upon months and even years spent in doing this well, while the same length of time prematurely employed in a hasty issue of ill adapted and inaccurate publications is worse than thrown away.<sup>51</sup>

In the years to come, Smith's insistence on perfection would be reflected in his work. He did convince the American Board that additional preparations were necessary in order to produce accurate Arabic translations that could guarantee the mission's success. The printing of Arabic literature on Malta was postponed.<sup>52</sup> During his first months in Syria, Smith invested much time in learning the Arabic language, and his perfectionism and hard work paid off. "Many of us have envied my husband the results of that diving among Arab roots," wrote Smith's first wife Sarah.<sup>53</sup> Smith did not remain on Malta for long, traveling first to Greece and then to Armenia, Georgia, and Persia in 1830, exploring new territories for missions with his colleague Dwight. In 1832, he traveled back to the United States in order to find a wife.<sup>54</sup> In 1834, he returned with Sarah Smith to Beirut, where he was supposed to establish the mission's Arabic press.<sup>55</sup>

Back in Beirut, Smith resumed his Arabic studies. Soon he was able to instruct his colleagues in the language:<sup>56</sup> "Having in view the more strictly literary department of our operations, he was naturally and necessarily led to pursue the study of Arabic and kindred languages to an extent hardly necessary, however desirable, for becoming a good speaker, or a good preacher."<sup>57</sup> Personal interest was not the only motivation behind the talented missionary's intensive engagement with formal Arabic, as well as the dialect spoken in Ottoman Syria. His goal was that the Christian literature printed by the American press would match the Syrians' language: "They

49 Leavy, *Eli Smith and the Arabic Bible*, 7.

50 *Ibid.*, 8.

51 Smith to Anderson (Malta, 1828): ABC 16.6.3 (164/1), cited in: Leavy, *Eli Smith and the Arabic Bible*, 9.

52 *Ibid.*, 10.

53 Hooker, *Memoir of Mrs. Sarah Lanman Smith*, 330.

54 MH 28 (1832), in: ROS 2, 311; Leavy, *Eli Smith and the Arabic Bible*, 11.

55 "Report on the Printing Establishment, adapted by Syrian Mission, for Dr. Anderson": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4 (62).

56 Smith and Rev. J. D. Paxton (Smyrna, January 24, 1837): ABC 16.5.1. (174); MH 31 (1835), in: ROS 2, 419: "I have for some time given the best hours of every day to teaching Arabic to two or three of our number, who are not yet proficient in it."

57 "Obituary Notice": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (227).

are to be addressed, not in the language of books, but to be talked to as they talk, in their own idiom, and with their own accents and tones, which are acquired the more perfectly, the earlier in life they are attempted.”<sup>58</sup>

Smith was a dedicated missionary all his life. He knew that the Syrian people needed not merely cultural, but also Christian, awakening. This would not be achieved by publicly attacking the doctrines of the Syrian churches, as the first American missionaries had done. Instead, Smith believed only careful, well-considered actions would succeed: “We shall take them by the hand and gently lead them to Christ.”<sup>59</sup>

This strategy did not always find favor, as demonstrated by the disagreement between Smith and the American Reverend John D. Paxton, who traveled to Syria to support the missionaries as a volunteer in 1836. Paxton repeatedly debated with the missionaries about their tactics in the mission field, challenging them to preach more aggressively, with less concern for education.<sup>60</sup> According to Paxton, seeking to reform the Christian churches from within was the wrong approach. The missionaries should urge converts to found their own church and “pull [...] down” their old “corrupt churches” if necessary.<sup>61</sup> Smith countered Paxton’s accusations in a letter from January 24, 1837; his tone was friendly but firm.<sup>62</sup> He wholly agreed with Paxton that there should be more preaching – as I have shown, this was a point of contention for the mission throughout its entire existence. Nevertheless, Smith did not believe that Paxton’s approach was very effective. The missionaries in Syria recognized early on that an aggressive stance was counterproductive. “Real Christian love ought to be the character of a missionary,” Smith responded to Paxton. People had to be brought to recognize their sins, but success was more likely when potential converts concluded for themselves that their former religious practices were false. Paxton called on the missionaries to be bold and direct, not to act “underhandedly” or in an overly cautious manner. Smith pointed out that Syrian Christians’ understanding of sin was different from that of the missionaries. Paxton might view idolatry as a great and unacceptable sin, but it was normal for Christians in Syria. The only way to influence their beliefs was to make them aware of their personal sins. The mission should be pleased with Syrians who agreed with the missionaries’ message and acted in accordance with Scripture, even if they continued to attend their own churches.<sup>63</sup> Here and elsewhere,<sup>64</sup> Smith emphasized that change would only occur over time: “We must not try to do it all at once.”<sup>65</sup> In an 1851 letter, he remarked to Anderson that not very much could be expected from the first generation of converts, but he was certain that the second and third generations

58 Smith, *The Missionary Character*, 9.

59 Smith to Paxton (Smyrna, January 24, 1837): ABC 16.5.1. (174).

60 Badr, “Mission to ‘Nominal Christians,’” 149–50.

61 Paxton to Dwight (January 2, 1837): ABC 16.5.1. (173), cited in: Badr, “Mission to ‘Nominal Christians,’” 151.

62 Smith to Paxton (Smyrna, January 24, 1837): ABC 16.5.1. (174).

63 Ibid.

64 MH 38 (1842), in: ROS 3, 342: “When a favorable juncture occurs ... perhaps we find the seed we had sown has sprung up and attained to considerable growth.”

65 Smith to Paxton (Smyrna, January 24, 1837): ABC 16.5.1. (174).

would grow to become “able and distinguished men.”<sup>66</sup> Smith and his colleague William Goodell were able to influence the ABCFM’s official position, formulated by Rufus Anderson, on relations with other Syrian Christians. Mission tactics were supposed to demonstrate restraint and respect.<sup>67</sup> “Our strength lies in doing much with little noise.”<sup>68</sup> Corresponding privately with Smith about Paxton’s position, Anderson agreed that there should be more preaching, but he also wrote that Paxton’s “boldness is courage without discretion.” Nevertheless, Paxton’s sharp criticisms did bring Anderson to question whether a problem existed.<sup>69</sup>

Smith dedicated his life to promoting the theology of New England’s Puritan fathers; his foremost goal was proclaiming Christ’s message. A second priority, however, concerned the means of reaching this goal: education, book printing, and a culture of knowledge. “Upon [the] system of divine truth his own hopes of life rested, and it was this which he earnestly labored, for thirty years to infuse into the Arabic literature, and transplant into the hard and stony soil of Syria’s moral desert.”<sup>70</sup>

### 3. American Arabic Type

Beginning in the 1820s, two presses earned renown for Arabic book printing: the Bulaaq Press, established in the Cairo neighborhood of the same name in 1822,<sup>71</sup> and also the English Church Missionary Society’s press on Malta, which began printing Arabic books in 1825/26.<sup>72</sup> To meet the growing demand for Arabic books for mission schools and other missionary activity, the ABCFM opened the *Matba‘at al-Amrikan* (American Mission Press) in Beirut in 1834.<sup>73</sup> At first, the press occupied the ground floor of the three-story building (popularly known as “*Burj Bird*”) that had been built by the missionary Isaac Bird and served as the mission’s headquarters.<sup>74</sup>

Smith was aware of the Arab reading public’s high expectations, and that the missionaries’ Arabic-language publications to this point did not correspond to the accustomed aesthetics of older calligraphic manuscripts. At this time, not even European centers for Arabic book printing (Paris, Leiden, London, and Leipzig) had developed a satisfactory standard typeface.<sup>75</sup> This state of affairs, as well as

66 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, June 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (199).

67 Badr, “Mission to ‘Nominal Christians,’” 133–46, 162.

68 Smith to Paxton (Smyrna, January 24, 1837): ABC 16.5.1. (174).

69 Anderson to Smith (June 14, 1837): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 01 (HHL).

70 “Obituary Notice”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (227).

71 Glaß, *Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut Again*, 13.

72 *Ibid.*, 10.

73 *Ibid.*, 14: The press was sometimes called the *al-Matba‘a al-Amrikiyya* (American Press). With the opening of the new press, the American mission relocated all Arabic book printing to Beirut. See Tibawi, “The American Missionaries in Beirut,” 174.

74 PBCFM, *Centennial of the American Press*, 4.

75 MH 40 (1844), in: ROS 3, 387: “There is a good font at Paris, understood to have been made under the direction of the celebrated Arabic scholar, De Sacy; another, perhaps equally good,

Smith's desire to operate independently of the English mission presses on Malta, encouraged him to develop a new typeface for the American press in Beirut.<sup>76</sup> The Arabic typeface produced by the Englishman Richard Watts, which was used by the English missions on Malta, had been available to the Americans since 1828/29.<sup>77</sup> However, it was not used by the American press on Malta, and it was used by the American Mission Press in Beirut only in 1836, two years after its opening. At first, there was no skilled printer available with a good command of Arabic. There were no punches for small letters, used for margin notes and quotations, and likewise no large letters.<sup>78</sup> Smith regarded the letters from London as highly deficient.<sup>79</sup> To develop a few typeface, the director of the Beirut press sought inspiration in the Arabic manuscripts, calligraphies, and printed works that were familiar to the educated reading public. In 1829, Smith visited the Syrian monastery Mar Yuhanna al-Shweir, home to one of the region's few printing presses,<sup>80</sup> and he was highly impressed by its typeface: "Certainly the form of the letter is far superior to that of any other which I have seen. The types are cast in the convent after the model of a distinguished Arabic penman."<sup>81</sup>

In 1835, the newly hired printer George Badger traveled to various presses in the area in order to acquire punches and matrices for preparing new molds.<sup>82</sup> The letters that he then produced, together with Watts's typeface, were to be used as a stopgap until a more satisfactory, original typeface could be created. In 1836, Eli Smith traveled on behalf of the press to sites such as Cairo, Damascus, Aleppo, Jerusalem, and Istanbul, in order to meet with scribes and collect manuscripts. Plans to use these manuscripts for developing a new style of text were dashed when Smith's ship wrecked off the coast of Smyrna (today: Izmir), and all of the documents were lost.<sup>83</sup> He returned to Istanbul, in order to collect two hundred new writing samples. Homan Hallock,<sup>84</sup> the American mission's typographer who resided in Smyrna, was eventually able to cut punches according to Smith's specifications.

exists in London; while Germany has two, both of them very good, one prepared at the expense of the Prussian government, for the Prussian universities, and the other from the celebrated foundry of Tauchnitz in Leipzig. But none of these are satisfactory to the Arabs themselves, who are fastidious in their taste, and great admirers of fine manuscripts. Not more satisfactory to them are the fonts used in their own printing offices at Constantinople and Cairo."

76 Glaß, *Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut Again*, 19.

77 *Ibid.*, 12.

78 Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 71; Roper, "The Beginnings of Arabic Printing by the ABCFM," 54.

79 Smith to Anderson (July 13, 1835): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (89). Even the Church Missionary Society, which used Watts' typeface, was dissatisfied with the "foreign appearance" of the Arabic letters. In 1838, the society began to develop its own typeface. See Glaß, *Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut Again*, 12.

80 Atiyeh, "The Book in the Modern Arab World," 237: The press was established by 'Abdallah Zakhir in 1723.

81 MH 25 (1829), in: ROS 2, 158.

82 Roper, "The Beginnings of Arabic Printing by the ABCFM," 59.

83 Glaß, *Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut Again*, 20; Stoddard, "The Rev. Eli Smith," 214.

84 Hallock later followed Smith to Beirut, assisting him with the press for a short time. See MH 29 (1833), in: ROS 2, 353.

Professor Edward Robinson, who traveled with Smith through Palestine and Syria in 1838 (see below), went to Germany to continue his work on the topography of Palestine. Robinson introduced Smith to the German Orientalists Emil Rödiger, Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer, and August Tholuck, as well as to the printer and publisher Karl Tauchnitz, who lived in Leipzig.<sup>85</sup> Once preparations were complete for Smith's own travel to Germany, he visited the prominent Orientalists and also Tauchnitz, who cut new punches and then cast the type into matrices.<sup>86</sup> The result was the font known as American Arabic Type.<sup>87</sup> Smith sent a first example to his friend and colleague in Syria, Tannus al-Haddad. Al-Haddad responded with his assessment in April 1839: "In regard to the Arabic letters, we have found the specimen [printing] thereof which you sent for our consideration rather deficient: the length and thickness of letters are not in the right proportion . . ." <sup>88</sup>

It is not known whether the typeface was reworked after al-Haddad's assessment. It is clear, however, that American Arabic Type came to Beirut only in 1841. Despite everything, the press did not operate as effectively as Smith would have liked. A suitable printer and many skilled employees were still needed. Homan Hallock, who had helped to produce the typeface, was stationed in Smyrna and did not want to leave.<sup>89</sup> George P. Badger, who proved to be very competent and conscientious, remained in Beirut for only one year.<sup>90</sup> Only in 1841 did the Beirut press find a printer, the Briton George Hurter, to take on the work that had been interrupted over and over.<sup>91</sup> Between 1835 and 1842, only twenty-nine works were printed in Beirut. In addition to Biblical and religious texts, these included three primers, two grammar books, and one book on medicine.<sup>92</sup>

Despite these obstacles, the American typeface earned renown beyond the borders of Syria, all the way to Alexandria and even Bombay. George Hurter and the missionary Whiting explained that the new lettering was not only "more beautiful than the old"; it was also well suited for schools and instruction in writing because of its similarity to calligraphy.<sup>93</sup>

85 Robinson to Smith (November 14, 1838): ABC 60 (63), (HHL); see also Emil Rödiger's letters to Smith from 1838: ABC 60 (65), (HHL).

86 MH 40 (1848), in: ROS 3, 387; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 55; Glaß and Roper, "Arabischer Buch- und Zeitungsdruck," 191. A favorable price quote also contributed to the Americans' decision to produce the typeface in Germany. See G. B. Whiting and G. Hurter, "Report of Works Printed at the Missionary Press in Beirut" (1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (28).

87 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 55.

88 Tannus al-Haddad to Smith (April 13, 1839), cited in: Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 86.

89 After the typeface was complete, Hallock traveled to the United States, where he used the same matrices to cut and cast Arabic letters for the American Board. The letters were made smaller than those in Beirut. See Rufus Anderson and John Pickering (June 16, 1843): ABC 1.1., Vol. 18, 132 (HHL).

90 Roper, "The Beginnings of Arabic Printing by the ABCFM," 58–59.

91 MH 37 (1841), in: ROS 3, 308–9.

92 Roper, "The Beginnings of Arabic Printing by the ABCFM," 58–59.

93 Whiting and Hurter, "Report of Works Printed at the Missionary Press in Beirut" (1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (28).

By the 1850s, the American Mission Press had become a leader in the technology of book printing.<sup>94</sup> In a letter to Rufus Anderson from December 26, 1853, Smith reported that natives establishing a new press in Beirut had even asked for his help in acquiring machines; they also asked to borrow the Americans' matrices for casting type.<sup>95</sup>

Not only the *Ma'arif* and *Adabiyya* presses, but also the Muslim-led *Funun* press, benefited from the missionaries' technological advances and the transfer of technical knowledge from West to East,<sup>96</sup> as the Arabist DAGMAR GLAß and the historian GEOFFREY ROPER have shown.

A glance through various Christian periodicals from this time suggests that readers must have been very familiar with American Arabic Type.<sup>97</sup> Jessup stated confidently that "the type of the Beirut Press is becoming more and more widely regarded as the best Arabic type in the world."<sup>98</sup> Even Arabists in Europe expressed interest in the Americans' type, deeming it the best created thus far.<sup>99</sup> By the mid-1850s, Smith had completed all of the desired improvements at the American Mission Press. Additional sets of characters were molded; "different sizes and ... new characters ... permit a wider variety of publications."<sup>100</sup> The addition of steam-engine technology in 1854 allowed the presses to operate more efficiently.<sup>101</sup>

With the development of faster printing technology at the end of the nineteenth century, simpler setting techniques and less elaborate characters were in demand; "the ornamental ligatures are more and more being laid aside."<sup>102</sup> American Arabic Type eventually fell out of fashion.

#### 4. *Al-Kitab al-Muqaddas*: The Arabic Bible

Already at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Henry Martyn – the famous Anglican pastor who served as a role model for Smith and generations of other mis-

94 Glaß, *Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut Again*, 25; Roper, "The Beginnings of Arabic Printing by the ABCFM," 57.

95 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, December 26, 1853): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (208). A letter from Khalil al-Khuri to Eli Smith (June 9, 1856) indicates that he wanted to purchase American Arabic Type for printing his new Arabic journal: ABC 50, Box 3 (HHL).

96 Glaß and Roper, "Arabischer Buch- und Zeitungsdruck," 193–94. The *Matba'at al-Ma'arif* (Press of Knowledge) was established by Butrus al-Bustani and Khalil Sarkis in 1857; Khalil Sarkis also started the *al-Matba'at al-Adabiyya* (Press for Literature) in 1876. The *Funun* press was established in 1874.

97 Glaß, *Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut Again*, 27–28: Bustani's famous encyclopedia *Da'irat al-Ma'arif* appeared in American Arabic Type as well.

98 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 362.

99 Ibid. In 1838, Emil Rödiger told Smith that he hoped Tauchnitz would make two of all the castings, since the press in Germany needed "a larger font and a font for musical notation." It is not known whether Smith fulfilled this request. See Rödiger to Smith (Halle, November 11, 1838): ABC 60 (65), (HHL).

100 Leavy, *Eli Smith and the Arabic Bible*, 12.

101 MH 50 (1854), in: ROS 4, 214; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 134.

102 Hall, "The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck," 285.

sionaries – recognized that the translation of the Bible into Arabic was one of the most important tasks of Christian evangelism: “We can begin to preach to Arabia, Syria, Persia, Tartary, part of India and China, half of Africa and nearly all the sea-coasts of the Mediterranean, including Turkey.”<sup>103</sup> Smith, who had studied Martyn’s experiences intently, must have remembered these words in Syria. Certainly the development of a new, aesthetically pleasing Arabic typeface was important not only for the production of Christian tracts and schoolbooks. The Holy Scripture, too, had to appear in a form that appealed to Arab readers.

When Rufus Anderson visited Syria in 1844, it was decided at a general meeting that a new Arabic Bible translation should be undertaken under the leadership of Eli Smith.<sup>104</sup> Smith, who was by now an accomplished Arabist, believed that the Catholic version from 1671 was harmful to Syrians’ understanding of Holy Scripture:

The whole version is not in a classical style. The structure of the sentences is awkward, the choice of words is not select, and the rules of grammar are often transgressed. We have been ashamed to put the sacred books of our religion, in such a dress, into the hands of a respectable Muhammedan or Druze and felt it our duty to accompany them with an apology.<sup>105</sup>

Another translation that was available to the mission was an Arabic New Testament, published by the London Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1727. This version, too, was unusable, as Smith reported: “It was corrected from the Paris and London Polyglotts, by Solomon Negri, and conformed with great strictness to the Greek original. But in this very strictness the corrector erred, for there is always a stiffness about it, and not unfrequently the idiom is quite foreign.”<sup>106</sup>

The American mission wanted a Bible translation with uniform phraseology for the entire text, in contrast to the different translated versions that the mission had thus far relied upon.<sup>107</sup> In 1848, Eli Smith embarked upon this project with assistance from the well-known Syrian poet (and accomplished specialist in Arabic grammar) Nasif al-Yaziji, as well as from Butrus al-Bustani, the mission’s Arabic teacher. The workload was so great that Smith soon complained about a shortage of helpers. In 1844, Smith proposed that one missionary should dedicate himself entirely to the translation, without having to perform additional duties.<sup>108</sup> The

103 MH 30 (1834), in: ROS 2, 390.

104 “Preface,” in Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*.

105 “Report of Rev. Eli Smith, D. D., in March 16th, 1844, on the existing Arabic Versions of the Scriptures,” in Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 1–2: The Catholic translation, based upon the Vulgate, was completed under the direction of the Archbishop of Damascus, the Maronite Sarkis al-Rour. Kahle, *Die Arabischen Bibelübersetzungen*, III–IV: Protestant missions in the nineteenth century printed this version without the Apocrypha.

106 “Report of Rev. Eli Smith on the existing Arabic Versions,” in Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 2.

107 “Dr. Smith’s Report on the Translation of the Scriptures, April 1854,” in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 8.

108 “Report of Rev. Eli Smith on the existing Arabic Versions,” in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 3.

ABCFM, however, was not able to meet Smith's request. Because Smith, Bustani, and al-Yaziji all had other responsibilities, their collaboration was not continuous. They rarely worked together in one location, but instead sent drafts and written comments back and forth to one another.<sup>109</sup> Beginning with the Old Testament, they worked through the Bible bit by bit. Bustani, who had already worked with Biblical Greek and Hebrew, translated individual passages first.<sup>110</sup> Through his schooling at the Maronite institution 'Ayn Warqa, he was presumably familiar with older manuscripts and versions of the Bible.<sup>111</sup> Smith and al-Yaziji then checked Bustani's preliminary translation for theological accuracy and linguistic proximity to the original text. As a third step, Bustani took the corrected passages and worked in textual elements from old Arabic manuscripts. These manuscripts were up to five hundred years old, generally containing fragments of Holy Scripture based on the text of the Vulgate (and sometimes the Peshitta).<sup>112</sup> After considering the different forms of expression within the manuscripts, Smith again reviewed Bustani's choice of words. Through consensus, the goal was to form a unity from the different translations of past centuries.<sup>113</sup> As a last step, Smith and al-Yaziji rechecked the grammar and lexicography of each text to be sure that it would speak to readers. Al-Yaziji completed the final proofreading.<sup>114</sup>

One of Smith's responsibilities as director of the American Mission Press was acquiring specialized literature for the mission library. For the Bible translation alone, he assembled a collection of specialized works on linguistics and textual criticism that would have otherwise been available only in European and American libraries, "scarcely valued or even understood, by the average missionary or clergymen at home."<sup>115</sup> Reference works included the most recent lexicons for Biblical languages from Europe, as well as old and new books on Arabic grammar.<sup>116</sup> The first published drafts were sent to Christians *and* Muslims in Beirut, Damascus, Aleppo, Jerusalem, Egypt, as well to Orientalists in Germany, along with a request for comments and corrections. Van Dyck later wrote that "many minds, native and foreign, were thus brought to bear upon the work."<sup>117</sup> The opinion of less educated

109 This is drawn from the correspondence between Bustani and Smith. For example, see Bustani to Smith (Souq al-Gharb, July 18, 1855): ABC 50, Box 3 (HHL).

110 "Smith's Report, 1854," in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 8: "The advantages of this proceeding are: – First, giving to the work a native coloring which a foreigner could not so easily accomplish. Second, bringing into it the terms and phrases in common and good use to express the ideas of the original ..."

111 Binay, "Revision of the manuscripts of the 'so-called Smith-Van Dyck Bible,'" 78.

112 "Smith's Report, 1854," in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 6–7: Some of these manuscripts had been republished by European Orientalists. Binay, introduction to *Translating the Bible into Arabic*, 16.

113 "Smith's Report, 1854," in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 8.

114 *Ibid.*, 9.

115 Hall, "The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck," 284.

116 For a list of the specialized literature that was used, see "Smith's Report, 1854," in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 5–7.

117 "Dr. C. V. A. Dyck's Report on the Translation, April 29th, 1863," in Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 15–16.

Syrians was also important to Smith, which is why he regularly sent his drafts to three or four natives, “in order to obtain their criticisms on the intelligibility of the language, and acceptableness of the style, to common readers.”<sup>118</sup> If they did not understand certain words or expressions, the passages in question were changed to facilitate comprehension.<sup>119</sup> The choice of Arabic words had to be understood by the “simple” population, too. Instead of transliterating JHWH, the Old Testament name for God, Smith decided to use *rabb* (LORD), which was already familiar to Arabs as a title for the highest being.<sup>120</sup> The elaborate process of revision and sending out requests for corrections slowed down work on the Bible. But the investment of time paid off, resulting in a “style that spoke in practically the same way to all reasonably capable Arabs, at least those from Egypt to Mesopotamia.”<sup>121</sup> If one compares the Americans’ translation to older Bible editions, it appears to be more of a revision than a completely new translation of the Bible into Arabic.<sup>122</sup>

For Smith, work on the Arabic Bible was laborious and exhausting. After some years, he grew dissatisfied with the collaboration with Nasif al-Yaziji:

It was soon found that in the terms of natural history and certain other sciences, as well as in the technicalities of different trades and professions, and in other like matters, his knowledge was indistinct and often very defective. And to search out, and rightly select words of this kind, has cost me much time.<sup>123</sup>

Smith consistently had to correct passages that al-Yaziji had translated: “The translation ... come[s] out, in very many passages, wide of the original meaning, and the force of the sentiment [is] lost.”<sup>124</sup> Smith’s colleagues did not seem to agree with his criticisms of al-Yaziji: “This part of my work I think some of my brethren do not, perhaps, fully appreciate. They would confide too much in Nâsîf, and expect more from him than they will realize.”<sup>125</sup>

Moreover, Smith was often unable to complete more than twelve verses per day.<sup>126</sup> Colleagues and friends later recalled that he had great difficulty deciding between synonyms, as Isaac Hall from the American Oriental Society wrote:

Some of the missionaries who believe in rapid work have said to me that he was therein a prey to indecision ... his (unfinished) Old Testament manuscript, as I have been told by those who

118 ABCFM, Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Syrian Mission, 35.

119 Kahle, *Die Arabischen Bibelübersetzungen*, V.

120 “Dr. Van Dyck’s Letter to Dr. S. Jessup, Sept. 8th, 1888, called out by Letter of Dr. Bruce, of Persia, asking the views of the Syria Mission on the subject,” in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 32.

121 Smith to the DMG (Beirut, May 9, 1856), in: ZDMG 10 (1856), 813. This letter was published in German.

122 Binay, introduction to *Translating the Bible into Arabic*, 15.

123 “Smith’s Report, 1854,” in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 9. See also “Letter from Dr. Smith on the Printing Establishment” (Beirut, October 16, 1855): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (216).

124 ABCFM, Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Syrian Mission, 34.

125 Ibid. See also “Dr. Van Dyck’s History of the Arabic Translation of the Scriptures, March 7th, 1885,” in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 29.

126 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, July 11, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8 (4).

saw it, often had a column of synonyms six or seven deep and high, above and below nearly every important word in the line.<sup>127</sup>

Smith and his team intentionally chose words that had fallen out of use, but which could be understood within the context of a passage, “trusting to the future enlightenment of the nation to bring back the language again nearer to its classical richness and purity.”<sup>128</sup> Sending out the text for corrections confirmed that the language of the translation was generally comprehensible. Smith hoped that the Bible would achieve even more than proclaiming the message of Christianity:

And so we believe, generally speaking, that this is the vessel by which the language will arise, accompanying the people’s return to the ranks of educated nations, although perhaps more Muhammedan phraseology than we assumed will flow into this new creation.<sup>129</sup>

Thus far, there is no published research that draws upon linguistic studies to show the effect of the American Bible translation on the development of the Arabic language in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>130</sup>

Despite his tireless efforts, Smith could not complete the translation. A visitor who spent several weeks at Smith’s house in 1856 wrote that the missionary was “feeble, attenuated, and under the necessity of guarding his precarious health with constant care.”<sup>131</sup> Before Smith died in 1857, he and his team had worked through the entire New Testament, the Pentateuch, and many of the prophetic books (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, and Isaiah through chapter 52).<sup>132</sup> On his deathbed, he told his colleague Wilson that the Bible should not be published in his name. Smith saw himself as responsible only for those texts that had already been printed (Genesis, Exodus, Matthew through chapter 12); in his estimation, all of the other drafts were incomplete.<sup>133</sup> Anderson later remarked with a gentle cynicism:

It did not please the Lord to grant the earnest desire of Dr. Smith to live and complete his translation of the Scriptures; and it must be admitted, that his ideal of perfection in the work was such, that it is doubtful whether he ever could have been satisfied that his entire translation was ready for publication.<sup>134</sup>

Van Dyck, who continued the translation after 1857, had to revise large parts of Smith’s work. It turned out that Smith’s New Testament translation was not based on the *textus receptus* of that time, but instead relied upon the latest research of the

127 Hall, “The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck,” 283.

128 “Smith’s Report, 1854,” in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 10.

129 Smith to the DMG (Beirut, May 9, 1856), in: ZDMG 10 (1856): 813.

130 The PhD student Rana Hisham Issa (University of Oslo) is working on a dissertation entitled “Arabia Minor: The Arrival of the Bible to the Arabic Language in 19th Century Lebanon.” See University of Oslo, Research, accessed July 2016, <http://www.uio.no/english/research/interfaculty-research-areas/kultrans/phd-group/rana/>.

131 Free Church of Scotland, “Dr. Eli Smith,” 238.

132 Van Dyck (Beirut, May 19, 1859), in: “Eulogies”: ABC 60 (139), HHL.

133 “C.V.A. Dyck’s Report, 1863,” in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 15.

134 Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 2, 327.

theologians Konstantin von Tischendorf, Samuel Pl. Tregellus, E. Lachmann and Henry Alford. All four theologians were working on a new edition of the Greek New Testament, based upon their study of old Greek Bible manuscripts (including the Codex Sinaiticus).<sup>135</sup> Because Smith's New Testament did not correspond to the *textus receptus*, the American Bible society sponsoring the Arabic Bible translation would not allow it to be published.<sup>136</sup> A committee of missionaries from the Syria Mission reviewed Smith's translated texts, requesting the Bible society's permission to correct, rather than discard, them: "In regard to the translation of the New Testament ... the committee are unanimously of the opinion that it has been made with great care and fidelity, and that it could, with comparatively little labor be prepared for the Press ..."<sup>137</sup>

The foundation that Smith laid was regarded as "invaluable."<sup>138</sup> Van Dyck was able to use some of Smith's work, but he had to begin anew with many New Testament books. In Van Dyck's estimation, if he devoted too much attention to Smith's drafts, the work would take even longer.<sup>139</sup>

### 5. The first Arabic journal in Syria: *Majmu' Fawa'id*

At the Syria Mission's annual meeting on April 30, 1851, it was decided "to commence printing a series of religious pamphlets, to consist of miscellaneous articles." Although the editing committee (Eli Smith, George Whiting and Henry De Forest) was tasked with producing this series,<sup>140</sup> most of the work fell to Smith.<sup>141</sup> Later he was often credited as the sole editor.<sup>142</sup> Although the significance of this religious pamphlet has not always been recognized, it was, in fact, the first printed Arabic periodical in nineteenth-century Syria.<sup>143</sup> By genre, it was a *majalla* – as in

135 "C. V. A. Dyck's Report, 1863," in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 15; Hall, "The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck," 279.

136 For this reason, it has been wrongly assumed that Smith's manuscripts were destroyed. See Isaac Hall's explanation in *JAOS* 13 (1889): viii–ix. Despite the unorthodox translation, the manuscripts were kept intact. See Binay, "Revision of the manuscripts of the 'so-called Smith-Van Dyck Bible,'" 75–76.

137 "Van Dyck's History, 1885," in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 26.

138 *Ibid.*, 27.

139 *Ibid.* More on Van Dyck's work on the Bible translation in chapter II, section 2.3.

140 "General Letter, after annual meeting of 1851" (Beirut, April 30, 1851): *ABC* 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (45).

141 In 1855, Smith wrote: "Of the Editing Committee, I have uniformly been the active member to do the work. The other members have ordinarily done little more than give advice." See "Letter from Dr. Smith on the Printing Establishment" (Beirut, October 16, 1855): *ABC* 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (216).

142 Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-'Arabiyya*, 53–54; Khuri, *Mudawwanat Sahafat Lubnan*, 301. In his list of Arabic periodicals, Dagher does not name an editor. See *Qamus al-Sihafa al-Lubnaniyya*, 252, no. 1550.

143 Glaß, "Von *Mir'at al-Ahwāl* zu *Tamarāt al-Funūn*," 29. Ayalon does not identify *Majmu' Fawa'id* as the first Arabic periodical, since it was a missionary, rather than an indigenous,

Europe, a journal that featured a mixture of information and entertainment.<sup>144</sup> The journal's title was self-explanatory: "Collected useful lessons" (*Majmu' Fawa'id*). The six issues that appeared in book format (12.5 × 23 cm) between 1851 and 1856 featured a variety of informative articles, especially sermon-like essays and short stories with practical theological lessons.<sup>145</sup> As with the mission's later publication *al-Nashra al-Usubu'iyya*, editors' names were uncredited. There were no editorials (as with Bustani's journal *al-Jinan*, established in 1870), and the articles' authors remained anonymous. According to Al-Rifa'i, no Syrian intellectual participated in the journal's publication; the topics it addressed all revolved around the work of the American missionaries.<sup>146</sup> Al-Rifa'i's statement contradicts the mission's annual report from 1851, which invited all members of the mission to contribute their own articles "or to procure [articles] from native friends."<sup>147</sup> Syrian helpers very likely did write some articles or translate them from English, or else revise the missionaries' Arabic drafts.<sup>148</sup> The American Mission Press's many books were frequently put together by a team, as Smith wrote to Anderson in 1856.<sup>149</sup> Distinguishing between authors, male or female,<sup>150</sup> is no longer possible.<sup>151</sup> (Figure 4)

The mission journal presumably modeled itself after American Christian periodicals that were intended for a wide audience.<sup>152</sup> Many of its essays promoted general knowledge in an often entertaining way. Topics included new developments in medicine,<sup>153</sup> geographical remarks on the lengths of the day in different parts of

publication. He calls the newspaper that Khalil al-Khuri began to publish in 1858 *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* (Garden of News), "the first journalistic undertaking in Lebanon." See *The Press in the Arab Middle East*, 31, 34.

144 Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 8. The names for journals *majalla* and *journal* came into widespread use only after 1884. See Daya, "Al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustani 'Aman 'ala Wafatihi."

145 Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 132. The issues were between sixteen and thirty-two pages long. Ayalon (*The Press in the Arab Middle East*, 34) mistakenly refers to only four pamphlets.

146 Al-Rifa'i, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-Suriyya*, 48.

147 "General Letter, after annual meeting of 1851" (Beirut, April 30, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (45).

148 For example, Bustani proofread not only the Bible translation, but also other publications of the mission press. In 1855, Smith mentioned Milham Shemayel, who was employed as a part-time proofreader: "Letter from Dr. Smith on the Printing Establishment" (Beirut, October 16, 1855): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (216).

149 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, March 13, 1856): ABC 60 (105), (HHL).

150 Missionaries' wives, female mission assistants, and Syrian Protestant women also contributed to the books and journals that were published by the mission press. More in Womack and Lindner, "'Pick up the pearls of knowledge.'" See also the entry on Hanni Wortabet in appendix II, no. 67.

151 The same is true of the missionary journal *Zahrira d-Bahra* (Rays of Light), published by ABCFM missionaries in Urmia. See Murre-van den Berg, "A 'Good and Blessed Father,'" 189.

152 For example, the *American Messenger*, published by the American Tract Society between 1843 and 1876, which featured religious news, Christian stories, and interesting information for young and old. See Brown, *The Word in the World*, 157.

153 "Nasa'ih Tibbiyya," (Medical Advice) *Majmu' Fawa'id* 1 (1851): 1–3.



Figure 4: Title page of the journal *Majmu' Fawa'id* (1851)

the world,<sup>154</sup> the history of Phoenicia,<sup>155</sup> the climate,<sup>156</sup> and the explorer Christopher Columbus.<sup>157</sup> Others focused on everyday theological observations such as the meaning of self-knowledge;<sup>158</sup> the importance of Biblical testimony;<sup>159</sup> scholarly opinions on wealth and poverty, conflict and reconciliation;<sup>160</sup> how small sins can lead quickly to larger ones;<sup>161</sup> the importance of prayer;<sup>162</sup> and the qualities of a Christian.<sup>163</sup> The topic of “knowledge,” frequently discussed in the Syrian Society

154 “Fawa'id Jughrafīyya,” (Geographic Information) *Majmu' Fawa'id* 2 (1852): 14.

155 “Tarikh Finiqīyya,” (Phoenician History) *Majmu' Fawa'id* 2 (1852): 19–24.

156 “Fi l-Hawa',” (About the Climate) *Majmu' Fawa'id* 3 (1855): 30–31.

157 “Fi Khristufurus Kulumbus,” (Christopher Columbus) *Majmu' Fawa'id* 4 (1855): 9–10.

158 “Ma'arifa al-Dhat,” (Self-Knowledge) *Majmu' Fawa'id* 2 (1852): 15–18.

159 “Asdaq al-Shuhud,” (The Most Important Testimony), *Majmu' Fawa'id* 2 (1852): 6.

160 “Mawa'iz Adabiyya,” (Moral Admonitions) *Majmu' Fawa'id* 2 (1852): 12–13.

161 “Man Tahawan fi l-Sagha'ir Yasqat rawidan rawidan fi l-Kaba'ir,” (Disregarding Small Sins Will Lead to Large Ones) *Majmu' Fawa'id* 1 (1851): 4–5.

162 “Yajib an Nusalli [...],” (We Must Pray) *Majmu' Fawa'id* 2 (1852): 24.

163 “Fi Safat al-Masihi,” (On the Qualities of a Christian) *Majmu' Fawa'id* 4 (1855): 21.

for Arts and Sciences,<sup>164</sup> was addressed here, too. The third issue featured twenty suggestions (“*naṣā’ih*”) for acquiring knowledge.<sup>165</sup> Living side by side with people who held differing religious and scholarly views was an opportunity to expand one’s horizon (“*wa tataṣa’a ‘uqūlnā*”).<sup>166</sup> The message was clear; encounters between different cultures promoted the acquisition of knowledge. Another theme taken up by the journal was women’s education. An anecdotal story about an Indian tribe demonstrated the importance of educating women, since they were responsible for childrearing<sup>167</sup> – an argument that this study has already explored with respect to the girls’ schools of the mission.<sup>168</sup> The next-to-last article in the final issue of *Majmu‘ Fawa’id*, published in 1856, emphasized the significance of books, a topic that was especially dear to Smith. In simple Arabic, the author appealed directly to readers:<sup>169</sup>

If you are mistaken or uncertain, they [the books] don’t scowl or laugh at you. ... They don’t care about the color of your skin, but instead open their hearts to you without making a sound, inviting you to explore the meaning of their words.<sup>170</sup>

Books are freely accessible, timeless, and constant in their message, offering education to all.<sup>171</sup>

Despite the journal’s short lifespan and its few published issues, *Majmu‘ Fawa’id* was a pioneering accomplishment that represented a decisive caesura “in the development of the Syrian, Arab, as well as Muslim press.”<sup>172</sup> Although the journal was not indigenous, as a medium of communication that was not controlled by the state it was a “cultural and technological novelty,”<sup>173</sup> according to DAGMAR GLAB. In the years to come, it paved the way for other periodicals that were established first by Syrian Christians, and then by Muslims.<sup>174</sup> This was the first time that a European-style magazine, seeking to inform and entertain, had come to the Middle East.<sup>175</sup> The target audience for *Majmu‘ Fawa’id* was entirely Christian, and largely Protestant as well. Within this community, it supported the work of the mission by promoting education and the teachings of the Bible. The journal lasted

164 See chapter I, section 2.4.

165 “*Nasa’ih*,” (Advice) *Majmu‘ Fawa’id* 3 (1855): 25–30.

166 *Ibid.*, 25.

167 “*Fi Fawa’id al-‘Ilm*,” (On the Uses of Knowledge) *Majmu‘ Fawa’id* 4 (1855): 13.

168 See chapter I, section 1.2.

169 In contrast to other articles, the wording and sentence structure are very simple. It seems likely that an American, perhaps even Smith himself, was the author.

170 “*Fa’idat al-Kutub*,” (The Usefulness of Books) in: *Majmu‘ Fawa’id* 6 (1856): 24.

171 *Ibid.*

172 Glab, “*Von Mir’āt al-Aḥwāl zu Tamarāt al-Funūn*,” 31–32.

173 *Ibid.*, 36.

174 For more on Christian and Muslim periodicals, see chapter II, section 2.5.

175 Glab, *Der Muqtaṭaf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1. Ami Ayalon (*The Press in the Arab Middle East*, 34) ascribes little significance to the mission journal: “It turned out to be a disorganized effort with little impact that died out after four issues, and merits mention only because it is sometimes considered ‘the very first and earliest of all Arabic-language periodicals.’” Tibawi succinctly concludes: “The main aim was obviously to spread a religious message, not to promote general education for its own sake.” (*American Interests in Syria*, 137)

for five years,<sup>176</sup> a consequence of Smith's workload and his worsening health in 1856. It would be seven more years before the Syria Mission brought out another periodical, called *Akhbar 'an Intishar al-Injil fi Amakin Mukhtalifa* (News about Spreading the Gospel in Different Locations).<sup>177</sup>

Salim Naufal almost earned the distinction of creating a bilingual, secularly oriented journal, even before Khalil al-Khuri started the *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* newspaper in 1858.<sup>178</sup> Naufal, a Syrian who had lived in London for some time, reached out to Eli Smith 1851: "I would not write to you if it weren't for your reputable diligence and your care for this country's prosperity." Naufal had played with the idea of establishing a bilingual newspaper for some time, "in the hope that its benefits would go beyond this part of the world."<sup>179</sup> He had already contacted the British colonel Charles Churchill, a former officer living in Syria,<sup>180</sup> and he hoped that Churchill, along with Smith and other important persons in the United States and Europe, might consider supporting the project financially. Naufal envisioned a weekly journal that would cover political, cultural, and economic topics, to be published by the American Mission Press.<sup>181</sup> Unfortunately, no response from Smith to this proposal has been found. It is unclear why Naufal's plans were not realized.

## 6. Biblical Researches in Palestine

Already during his first years abroad, Smith communicated regularly with scholars in the United States and Europe – another sign of his extraordinary work ethic. When he traveled back to the United States in 1832, he visited his former teacher and friend Edward Robinson, professor of Biblical literature at Union Theological College in New York. Robinson's scholarly knowledge, and Smith's personal experience traveling with Dwight through Armenia and Persia, inspired the men to travel together from Sinai to Jerusalem. "The particular department of Biblical Geography is one in which I have long felt a deeper interest than almost any other brand of biblical literature," Smith wrote to Robinson in 1837.<sup>182</sup> With Smith by his side as a knowledgeable guide and an expert in languages, Robinson could move

176 Many Christian periodicals in the nineteenth-century United States were very short-lived, presumably related because the media landscape was still in the early stages of its development. See EBSCO Information Services, Thematic Collection from AAS Historical Periodicals: General Interests Christian Periodicals, 1743–1889, accessed June 2014, <http://www.ebscohost.com/titleLists/gic-coverage.pdf>.

177 More in chapter II, section 2.5.

178 See chapter I, section 2.5.

179 Naufal to Smith (London, August 1, 1851): ABC 50 (HHL). (TA)

180 Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 170.

181 Naufal to Smith (London, August 1, 1851): ABC 50 (HHL): "The foreign version's economic section would include news on the economy in Syria while the Arabic version would include economic news from around the world. The literary section would present the detailed history of Arabs, while the political section would include the Istanbul periodical, entitled 'Splendor of the East.'" (TA)

182 Smith to Robinson (Smyrna, November 10, 1837): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (109).

forward with *Biblical Researches in Palestine*.<sup>183</sup> On March 12, 1838, they departed from Cairo and made their way towards the Arabian Peninsula. In the United States and Germany, Robinson had read and studied nearly everything that had been written about the Holy Land. Now he wanted to follow the paths that earlier explorers and travelers had taken.<sup>184</sup> Robinson and Smith sought “to lay open the treasures of Biblical Geography and History still remaining in the Holy Land; treasures which have lain for ages unexplored, and had become so covered with the dust and rubbish of many centuries, that their very existence was forgotten.”<sup>185</sup>

Every Biblical site was to be historically illuminated, in order to establish its earlier significance.<sup>186</sup> With this undertaking, Robinson became the founder of modern Palestinology. The maps of ancient Palestine that the two men prepared turned out to be denser and more precise than they had expected.<sup>187</sup> In the end, Smith provided the details “that made the book so outstanding.”<sup>188</sup> Even before the trip, he compiled a list of place names from the writings of educated natives. During the trip, he corrected and expanded the list by surveying residents. Smith’s work also proved helpful to the ABCFM, facilitating a uniform spelling for the names of Arabic villages and cities in the publications of the American Board, with English transliterations that were very close to the original Arabic.<sup>189</sup> The two-volume first edition of *Biblical Researches* held considerable archaeological significance as well, as the Biblical archaeologist JAMES B. PRITCHARD wrote in 1958: “Leaving the beaten paths of former travelers, Robinson and Smith discovered many formerly unknown sites and made scores of identifications of ancient places which have stood up under the more controlled methods of the archaeologist.”<sup>190</sup>

Smith and Robinson each kept a journal during their trip, carefully recording the times and places of their departures, temperatures, precise descriptions of the views from different lookout points, the cost of their lodgings, as well as the characteristics and behavior of the people they met.<sup>191</sup> In their descriptions, they rarely

183 Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. 1, 1–2. One year earlier, it seemed as if their plans might not be realized. In 1837, Smith wrote to Robinson that his heavy workload and responsibilities with the press would not allow him to go. After the ABCFM granted permission for the trip, he changed his response. See the correspondence between Robinson and Smith (1837): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (10). Anderson approved the trip because it did not have to be subsidized by the financially burdened ABCFM. See Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, April 23, 1836): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 1 (HHL).

184 Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. 1, xii, 178: “This whole region [‘Arabah], up to the present time, has been a complete terra incognita to geographers. Not that travellers had not already crossed it in various directions; for Seetzen in 1807 had gone from Hebron to the convent of Sinai; and Henniker in 1821 ... had passed from the convent to Gaza.”

185 *Ibid.*, xi.

186 *Ibid.*, ix.

187 Pritchard, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, 57.

188 From a letter written by Norman Lewis to David Finnie (October 9, 1964), in: Finnie, *Pioneers East*, 202 (note).

189 Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. 1, ix–x.

190 Pritchard, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, 59.

191 Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. 1, 32; Pritchard, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, 59, 61.

missed an opportunity to emphasize the regrettable contrast between the past glories of ancient sites and their current state of decline.

It is impossible to wander around these scenes and behold these hoary yet magnificent ruins, without emotions of astonishment and deep solemnity. Every thing around testifies of vastness, and of utter desolation. Here lay once that mighty city, whose power and splendour were proverbial throughout the ancient world.<sup>192</sup>

While Smith firmly believed that religion and culture in the Levant were in a desolate state, Robinson's motives were more purely historical than Christian.<sup>193</sup> The *Biblical Researches* became a widely read work. Robinson's and Smith's fascination with the richness of the sites' history, the diversity of the landscapes, and the adventure of traveling in a foreign world made for compelling reading.<sup>194</sup> The 1,214 pages of the two volumes were filled with detailed travel descriptions that brought the natural landscape to life before readers' eyes:

The village [ʿAnata] lies where the broad ridge slopes off gradually towards the southeast. On this side are tilled fields, and we had passed several others on our way. The grain was still standing; the time of harvest not having yet come. ... Thus er-Râm (Ramah) bore N. N. W. on its conical hill; and Jeba' (Geba) was before us, bearing N. 10° E. ...<sup>195</sup>

As noted by the journal of the German Oriental Society in 1847, *Biblical Researches in Palestine* was at the forefront of Oriental studies in North America, where the field was still in its infancy.<sup>196</sup> In 1842, Robinson received the gold medal of the Royal Geographic Society in London for his topographical portrait of the Arabian Peninsula and the Holy Land. He was highly respected by experts in ancient Oriental studies, in the nineteenth century and after: "The works of Robinson and Smith alone surpass the total of all previous contributions to Palestinian geography from the time of Eusebius and Jerome to the early nineteenth century," wrote the American archaeologist W. F. Albright.<sup>197</sup> Smith's contribution was just as highly valued, even into the twentieth century. A British scholar wrote in 1964 that Smith's list of place names was "unique. ... No one else (to my knowledge) did anything similar for several decades. ... As material to be used in building up a picture of the human and economic geography of the country in the 1830's they are first rate."<sup>198</sup>

192 Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. 1, 20.

193 *Ibid.*, 31: "As is the case of most of my countrymen, especially in New England, the scenes of the Bible had made a deep impression upon my mind from the earliest childhood; and after in riper years this feeling had grown into a strong desire to visit in person the places so remarkable in the history of the human race. ... With all this, in my own case, there had subsequently become connected a scientific motive."

194 DMG, *Jahresbericht der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft für das Jahr 1846*, 150.

195 Robinson and Smith, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, vol. 1, 438.

196 "Die orientalischen Studien in Nord-Amerika," ZDMG 1 (1847): 87.

197 From W. F. Albright, *Archaeology of Palestine*, 1956, 25, cited in: Finnie, *Pioneers East*, 181. See also Pritchard, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, 57.

198 Finnie, *Pioneers East*, 202 (note).

In 1851, Rufus Anderson encouraged his friend Edward Robinson – who had in the meantime become president of the American Oriental Society<sup>199</sup> – to continue his investigations of the topography of the Holy Land, resigning from his position at the university, if necessary, if he needed more time. Anderson promised assistance in planning Robinson’s journey to Syria.<sup>200</sup> Robinson arrived in Syria in 1852, where he and Smith began to revise the *Biblical Researches*, particularly the place names and maps. Since the first edition from 1841 was already sold out, there was additional incentive for bringing a new edition to print. In 1856, the *Biblical Researches* was published in two volumes.<sup>201</sup> As an additional resource for scholars in East and West, Robinson had Eli Smith print a separate list of Arabic names and places that was added as an appendix to the new edition.

### 7. Additional publications

Smith, like other colleagues in the Syria Mission, was a respected author of books and essays on a variety of topics. Three of his sermons, along with two speeches that he gave during his 1832/33 trip to the United States, were published as *Missionary Sermons and Addresses* in 1834.<sup>202</sup> The collection featured his impressions from his first years in Syria, including his mostly unfavorable experiences with Muslims (“a noble race . . . withered and blasted by their false religion”<sup>203</sup>) as well as Christians, whose condition was even more concerning and in need of missionary attention.<sup>204</sup> His descriptions of piety and faith did not differ significantly from those in the *Missionary Herald* or in other missionaries’ autobiographies.<sup>205</sup> The sermon “Farewell Request in Behalf of the Syrian Mission”<sup>206</sup> reveals Smith’s disappointment in the religious and moral condition of the population during his first years in Syria. Unable to find evidence of “devoted active piety” or “just ideas of Christian consistency in the public mind,”<sup>207</sup> the missionaries experienced feelings of loneliness and self-doubt, even questioning their faith: “The missionary, more

199 Anderson to Robinson (Boston, June 10, 1846): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 25 (HHL); Robinson to Anderson (New York, June 17, 1844): ABC 10, Vol. 36 (158), (HHL).

200 Anderson to Robinson (Boston, January 3, 1851): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 14 (HHL).

201 E. Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine and in the Adjacent Regions. A Journal of Travels in the 1838 by E. Robinson and E. Smith. With new maps and plans*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1856).

202 The work was translated into German and appeared in the *Magazin für neueste Geschichte der evangelischen Missions- und Bibelgesellschaften* in the first quarterly issue of 1836.

203 Smith, *Missionary Sermons and Addresses*, 17.

204 The desolate state of Christianity meant that Islam would continue to thrive. *Ibid.*, 64.

205 Khalaf, *Cultural Resistance*, 120: “Even Eli Smith, often singled out for his balanced and conciliatory views, fell prey to this contemptuous language.” Examples of autobiographies include William Goodell, *The Old and the New; or, The Changes of Thirty Years in the East, with some Allusions to oriental Customs as elucidating Scripture* (New York, 1853) and Isaac Bird, *Bible Works in Bible Lands; or, Events in the History of the Syria Mission. Fully Illustrated* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1872).

206 Smith, *Missionary Sermons and Addresses*, 131–82.

207 *Ibid.*, 143.

than all other men perhaps, needs to use constant watchfulness and diligence that his faith fail not, and his love grow not cold.”<sup>208</sup>

Smith’s depiction of the missionaries’ daily routine in Syria is particularly noteworthy. The Syrian people were quite willing to spend many hours with the missionaries, “so little is time valued by them.” There was a steady stream of visitors to the mission house, with some guests arriving at night out of fear of being seen. “Family prayers” were at first held in a small group, but they soon became a public event. Those who attended read Bible verses aloud, and then the texts were discussed after the missionaries provided introductory remarks.<sup>209</sup> Smith found these discussions “interesting, and often animated”:<sup>210</sup> “The Arab mind is of a cast to add to the interest of such exercises. Active and ingenious in its character, its fertile invention is ever bringing forward some new theory or explanation of Scripture.”<sup>211</sup> From this perspective, the Bible circles and prayer meetings became forums for dialogue between two different cultures, in a way that had previously not existed in Syria.

Smith wrote two guides for new missionaries that provided an overview of missions’ work, as well as related problems and expectations: *Trials of Missionaries* (1832) and *The Missionary Character* (1840). In the latter work, Smith was more reflective in his approach to dialogue with the natives. He advised against being too judgmental when approaching a new culture, similar to his exchange with Paxton in 1837 (see above):

In his *partialities* [the missionary] should not be narrow-minded. We naturally think our own country the best in the world; the best in its soil, its scenery, its climate, its government, its people. . . . But will you let this American partiality bias your feelings and govern your deportment in the missionary field? . . . Better is it for the missionary to feel himself a citizen of the world.<sup>212</sup>

Smith also wrote for the American religious quarterly *Bibliotheca Sacra*, which sought to reach a broader audience than the *Missionary Herald* through its articles on a variety of scholarly topics. One of his articles dealt with winemaking in the various areas of Mount Lebanon. The topic was presumably assigned by the journal’s editors, since Smith did not drink alcohol or present himself as an expert in wine.<sup>213</sup>

When the introduction of Arab music in Protestant worship services became a subject of controversy, Smith felt obliged, “in consequence of the necessities of my calling,”<sup>214</sup> to undertake another substantial translation project in a field that he

208 Ibid., 144.

209 Ibid., 160–62.

210 Ibid., 162.

211 Ibid., 163.

212 Smith, *The Missionary Character*, 14 (emphasis mine).

213 Smith, “The Wines of Mount Lebanon.” In the same volume of the journal, Smith gave a historical overview of Christian-Muslim relations in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish government’s accommodation of Protestants. See “Turkish Toleration,” *Bibliotheca Sacra and American Biblical Repository* 3 (1846): 390–97.

214 Smith, “A Treatise on Arab Music,” 173: To this point, the missionaries had not introduced Arab music into Protestant worship services: “The mission with which I am connected, has not yet succeeded in introducing singing into Arabic worship. . . . not only do we find the singing of

knew little about, publishing “A Treatise on Music” in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (JAOS) in 1851. The work was written by Smith’s friend from Damascus, Mikha’il Mishaqa, with whom he corresponded frequently (see below).<sup>215</sup> In the treatise (*Al-Risala al-Shihabiyya fi l-Sina’a al-Musiqiyya*, completed around 1840),<sup>216</sup> Mishaqa described the unique features of Arab composition, its scales, and the characteristics of traditional Arab instruments. Smith, who was previously unfamiliar with Arab musical theory, explained his translation strategy in the introduction: “In translating, I have abridged his work a good deal, have not always observed his order in the arrangement of the sections, and have frequently taken the liberty to express his thoughts in my own style.”<sup>217</sup> It is clear that Smith must have occupied himself intensively with music theory and Mishaqa’s essay in order to provide a translation that was accurate and comprehensible to American readers. Through his contacts at Yale College, Smith also assisted Mishaqa in his research, arranging for him to receive two Arabic manuscripts that were not available in Damascus. Smith translated several chapters from one of the manuscripts, adding them to his translation of Mishaqa’s essay.<sup>218</sup>

Eli Smith also wrote several works in Arabic for the American Mission Press, including the theological treatises *Kitab al-Mabahith fi Ittiqadat Ba’ad al-Kana’is* (Investigations in the Dogmas of Some Churches [1854]) and *al-Bab al-Maftuh fi A’mal al-Ruh* (The Open Door – The Works of the Holy Spirit [written together with Bustani and published in 1843 and 1863]). Together with Bustani and al-Yaziji, Smith revised the *Tarnimat li l-’Ibada* hymnal (1851) that had first been published in 1836 by the Church Missionary Society on Malta. Butrus al-Bustani also translated a schoolbook that Smith had written on the fundamentals of arithmetic (*Kitab Dalil al-Sawab fi ’Ilm al-Hisab*, 1837).<sup>219</sup>

## 8. Smith’s involvement with the Oriental societies

Eli Smith assumed a leading role in correspondence between the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences (1847–1852) and Western Oriental societies, as already depicted in chapter I (section 2.4). Since Smith was responsible for the mission library and book printing, he acquired new studies for the mission and also distributed

the Arabs no music to us, but our musicians have found it very difficult, often impossible, to detect that nature of their intervals, or imitate their tunes.”

215 Smith, “A Treatise on Arab Music,” 174: “[He] is my personal friend and correspondent, and one of the most intelligent of his nation whom I have known.” Among Smith’s papers at Harvard, there are several letters to and from Mishaqa. See ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5; ABC 50, Box 1–2 (HHL).

216 The manuscript is held by NEST: MS Nr. AP-7.

217 Smith, “A Treatise on Arab Music,” 174.

218 Ibid., 200: “From this I have translated most of the chapter in rhythm, and also the section on the ancient guitar, dealing as freely with it in translating, as with Meshâkah’s work.” Smith was referring to a manuscript from the year 666; its author and title are unnamed.

219 More on these works in appendix I.

its own printed works.<sup>220</sup> This was true of his communications with the German Oriental Society (DMG), and presumably with the Syro-Egyptian Society as well, which was founded in London in 1844. A preamble and membership list from the Syro-Egyptian Society are part of Smith's collected papers today.<sup>221</sup> Eli Smith was also a corresponding member of the American Oriental Society, founded in 1842, and he sent regular reports to the society's leadership. Rufus Anderson, who was one of the society's five directors, hoped that his foreign missionaries would participate in the exchange of ideas with scholars at home. In 1843, he wrote to Smith:

The Address of Mr. Pickering before the American Oriental Society will show you the existence and objects of that new association. The Society may be made an exceedingly useful instrument, and I hope you will write for it, and induce other members of the mission to do the same. ... Contributions of this sort will be gratefully received, and scarcely anything in the way of a contribution to the stock of knowledge can come amiss.<sup>222</sup>

Other missionaries in Syria – including Simeon H. Calhoun, William Goodell, Henry De Forest, William M. Thomson, Cornelius Van Dyck and Henry Harris Jessup – were also corresponding members. The JAOS regularly published travel accounts, copies of archaeological inscriptions, translations of Arabic treatises, and announcements of new works by Syrian and American authors in the American Mission Press.<sup>223</sup> From Beirut, the library of the American Oriental Society received these new works as well as copies of Arabic manuscripts.<sup>224</sup> As was common practice among missions at this time,<sup>225</sup> the Americans in Syria sent archaeological artifacts to the American Oriental Society, including ancient bronzes from

220 Many of Smith's letters to Anderson contained lists of books that Smith sought to acquire. These books were intended for the mission library, as well as for assistance in the translation of Arabic schoolbooks. See Smith to Anderson (Boston, April 19, 1841): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (139). Smith also took book orders from the mission's Syrian helpers and passed them along to the ABCFM. See Smith to Anderson (Beirut, December 16, 1848): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (176).

221 "Syro-Egyptian Society": ABC 60 (144), (HHL).

222 Anderson to Smith (Boston, August 21, 1843): ABC 60 (1), (HHL).

223 On the corresponding members, see JAOS 2 (1851): xxxvi, and JAOS 9 (1866): lxx. Missionaries' contributions to the journal: Smith's translation of the "Treatise on Arab Music" (see above); H.A. De Forest, "Notes of a Tour in Mount Lebanon and to the Eastern Side of Lake Hûleh," JAOS 2 (1851): 237–47; *ibid.*, "Notes on the Ruins in the Bûqa'a and in the Belâd Ba'albek," JAOS 3 (1853): 349–66; *ibid.*, "Phoenician Inscriptions of Sidon," JAOS 5 (1856): 227–59; C. Van Dyck, "On the Present Condition of the Medical Profession in Syria," JAOS 3 (1853): 561–91.

224 In JAOS 9 (1866): viii, "From Rev. H. H. Jessup, dated Beirut, Sept. 19th, 1866: 'I take pleasure in sending you, for the Society, the first volume of Mr. Butrus Bistany's new Arabic lexicon, the Muhîl el Muhîl. Mr. Bistany is going on with publishing of the two remaining volumes as rapidly as possible. The price to non-subscribers will be four pounds Sterling for the three volumes. I think you will be pleased with it.'"

225 Nielssen, et al., *Protestant Missions and Local Encounters*, 7: "Why was collecting material culture seen as a missionary task? Missionary collectors clearly formed a part of what has been termed the 'culture of travelling' in a general sense. In the nineteenth century, collection was a most common activity among travellers. ... The importance granted to the collection of ethnographic artefacts is underlined by the fact that some of the missionary societies even founded their own museums."

Mount Lebanon<sup>226</sup> and a stone block with a Greek inscription.<sup>227</sup> They also sent contemporary examples of Syrian traditions, such as a head covering worn by married women in Mount Lebanon.<sup>228</sup>

Before Smith traveled to Germany at the end of 1839 so that Karl Tauchnitz could cast the Arabic type in Leipzig, Edward Robinson introduced him to the German Orientalists Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (who later founded the DMG) and Emil Rödiger (also a DMG member).<sup>229</sup> After his trip to Germany, Smith stayed in touch with Fleischer and Rödiger. At the inaugural meeting of the DMG in Leipzig in 1845, Smith was named a corresponding member.<sup>230</sup> The society was less interested in Smith's missionary work, and more in his scholarly activities in Syria. The society's journal published several excerpts from Eli Smith's letters, which not only demonstrate Smith's interest in the society's scholarly pursuits, but also his enthusiasm for research and his collaborations with Syrian scholars and friends.<sup>231</sup>

I have been searching relentlessly for artifacts with Phoenician writing, but to no avail. The jewelers here do not just buy old coins, but sometimes cut stones as well. Some time ago I heard of two stones with writing on them similar to what you would recognize as ancient Hebrew; they had been seen at a jeweler's in Damascus, but they were sold and gone before I could ask about them. I haven't been able to learn more about the inscriptions you identified near 'Amschit and in Seilun.<sup>232</sup>

Smith also encouraged the DMG to send books to the library of the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences. The German society reported in 1848:

In the meantime, we have sent the library of the promising new society (which we are happy to assist) the first two works supported by our society – Cazwini's *Athar – al – bilād* by Wüstenfeld und Nasif's<sup>233</sup> *Epistola critica* by Mehren [...].<sup>234</sup>

226 "Additions to the Library and Cabinet of the American Oriental Society. May 1849 – February, 1851. I. By Donation," JAOS 2 (1851): xxxii.

227 "Additions to the Library and Cabinet of the American Oriental Society. March, 1851 – April, 1852," JAOS 3 (1853): iv.

228 "Additions to the Library and Cabinet of the American Oriental Society. May 1849 – February, 1851. I. By Donation," JAOS 2 (1851): xxxii.

229 Robinson to Smith (November 14, 1838): ABC 60 (63), (HHL); Rödiger to Smith (Halle, November 11 and November 25, 1838), (Halle, October 12, 1848): ABC 60 (65), (HHL).

230 Edward Robinson, too, was a corresponding member. See DMG, *Jahresbericht der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft für 1845–1846*, 152.

231 To learn more about an old manuscript on arithmetic, he asked Mikha'il Mishaqa, Nasif al-Yaziji, Mahud Efendy ("the most learned [...] Muslim [...] in Damascus"), and Butrus al-Bustani. See Smith to the DMG (Beirut, August 3, 1850), in: ZDMG 4 (1850): 519–20. In 1850, Smith sent copies of thirteen manuscripts with Latin and Greek inscriptions to Leipzig. The original manuscripts had been collected by his colleague Henry De Forest. See ZDMG 4 (1850): 144.

232 Smith to the DMG (Beirut, August 3, 1850), in: ZDMG 4 (1850): 520. Smith's original letters no longer exist, according to information provided by the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, where the DMG archive is located. The letters were translated into German by Emil Rödiger and reprinted in the ZDMG.

233 Nasif al-Yaziji.

234 Fleischer, "Gesellschaft der Künste und Wissenschaften in Beirut," 78–79.

Eli Smith's collected papers demonstrate that, from this point on, the Syria Mission and the DMG regularly exchanged books, reprints, and copies of archaeological inscriptions – an early form of scholarly networking between Germany and the Near East.<sup>235</sup> Emil Rödiger, who corresponded personally with Smith, valued Smith's engagement very much: "Your communications are of great interest to the German Orientalists, and I urgently ask that you will support us as well."<sup>236</sup>

### 9. Correspondence with Syrian friends and colleagues

Smith exchanged letters not only with the ABCFM and prominent scholars in Europe and the United States. Numerous Arabic letters in the ABCFM archive attest to the missionary's lively correspondence within Syria, including with the mission's native helpers.<sup>237</sup> The loose and unsorted collection, which thus far has attracted little notice, contains drafts of letters from Smith himself, providing a glimpse into his thoughts as well as his knowledge of Arabic. A comparable collection of letters does not exist for any other ABCFM missionary in Syria. This does not mean, however, that Smith was an anomaly. In addition to the personal and professional letters that the missionaries regularly sent home, there was also a lively correspondence within the Protestant community in Syria, as CHRISTINE LINDNER describes:

The exchange of letters was an important medium through which members of the Protestant Circle constructed and strengthened their community. The use of letters to convey information was not a new concept introduced by the ABCFM missionaries to Ottoman Syria. Rather the novelty of the Protestants' letter writing resided in their wide-spread use of letters, for written correspondences were exchanged by most members of the Circle, not just its elite members.<sup>238</sup>

It is well known that Van Dyck corresponded with the Damascus historian Mikha' il Mishaqa.<sup>239</sup> Henry Harris Jessup reported that he exchanged letters in Arabic with

235 Prof. Dr. R. Anger, authorized representative of the DMG library (Leipzig, April 15, 1853): ABC 60, Box 1 (20), (HHL).

236 Rödiger to Smith (Halle, October 12, 1848): ABC 60 (65), (HHL). The letter shows that Smith helped Rödiger gather materials on modern Syriac, which Rödiger wanted to use for the publication of a "grammatical-lexical portrait of the language."

237 An additional archival collection, including family letters and private photographs, was assembled by Eli Smith's great-granddaughter Margaret Russell Leavy. It is located at the Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut. See Guide to the Eli Smith Family Papers, accessed July 2016, <http://drs.library.yale.edu/HLTransformer/HLTransServlet?stylename=yul.ead2002.xhtml&pid=divinity:124&clear-stylesheet-cache=yes>.

In 1845, Smith wrote to Anderson that he needed a break and wanted to travel to the United States, since he had composed around one hundred letters and documents since the past October. See ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 3 (102).

238 Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 127. Some letters from Syrian Protestants were translated for the *Missionary Herald*: for example, MH 25 (1829), in: ROS 2, 170–74; MH 27 (1831), in: ROS 2, 272–73. Smith's papers in the Harvard Houghton Library include a handwritten, Arabic-language text, in which Elyas Fawaz and Jacob Gregory Wortabet describe their work as Protestant preachers in Sidon in 1828. See ABC 50, Box 1 (HHL).

239 Smith to Mishaqa (April 16, 1849): ABC 50, Box 1 (HHL); Van Dyck to Anderson ('Abeih, July 28, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (323).

“Abu Selim” – that is, with Butrus al-Bustani, the father of Selim: “A missionary who cannot himself write a letter in the vernacular is greatly crippled and embarrassed in his work.”<sup>240</sup>

Eli Smith stayed in touch with the native Protestants Antonius Yanni,<sup>241</sup> Shahin Barakat,<sup>242</sup> Muhammad Qasim,<sup>243</sup> Suleiman al-Salibi,<sup>244</sup> as well as his colleagues Elyas Fawaz,<sup>245</sup> Tannus al-Haddad,<sup>246</sup> Nasif al-Yaziji, Butrus al-Bustani, Mikha’il Mishaqa, and John Wortabet. Only in a few cases, as with Wortabet or Bustani, were English letters exchanged.<sup>247</sup> Such letters generally discussed the well-being of family members, the progress of missionary work, the exchange of books and other materials, or negative experiences with the mission’s opponents. Correspondence with Bustani often discussed next steps in the Bible translation and included translation drafts. A letter written by Bustani on July 18, 1855 explains his plans to create a new lexicon that would be easier to use than Arabic reference works, modeled after the format of Western lexicons.<sup>248</sup> Smith and Bustani probably exchanged ideas about this project more than once, since there was a great need for such a reference work.<sup>249</sup> It can hardly be a coincidence that fourteen years later, in 1869, the first volume of Bustani’s dictionary *Muhit al-Muhit* (The Breadth of the Ocean) appeared in the American Mission Press. The second volume followed in 1870.<sup>250</sup>

Smith maintained a particularly lively correspondence with the Damascus historian Mikha’il Mishaqa, a Greek Catholic scholar who converted to Protestantism in 1848.<sup>251</sup> The two men exchanged books and writings, and they discussed the difficulties that Mishaqa encountered because of his conversion, including his written dispute with the Greek Catholic patriarch Maximus.<sup>252</sup> Smith not only acted as

240 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 115.

241 See appendix II, no. 73.

242 *Ibid.*, no. 16.

243 *Ibid.*, no. 49.

244 See chapter I, section 2.3, and appendix II, no. 52.

245 *Ibid.*, no. 22.

246 *Ibid.*, no. 31.

247 See ABC 60 (12) and (98), (HHL). There are no Arabic-language letter drafts from Smith to Wortabet. Smith’s responses to him were presumably in English.

248 Bustani to Smith (Souq al-Gharb, July 18, 1855): ABC 50, Box 3 (HHL).

249 However, there are no examples of this in Smith’s collected letters.

250 More on this in chapter III, section 1.4.

251 See appendix II, no. 46; more on Mishaqa in Zachs, “Mikhā’īl Mishāqa.”

252 Smith to Mishaqa (June 8, 1849 and July 14, 1849): ABC 50, Box 1 (HHL). The letters indicate that Mishaqa corresponded actively with numerous individuals. On the dispute with Patriarch Maximus, see Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 88, 366. In 1849, Smith wrote in the *Missionary Herald*: “Mr. Meshakah favors me with a copy of all the correspondence between him and his antagonist, and also of his journal. The whole is deeply interesting, both from the ability he displays, and the deep Christian sincerity that moves him. The Protestant spirit, in the best sense, has got a firm hold of him. Every word of the documents in my hands deserves to be translated and printed at home.” See MH 45 (1849), in: ROS 4, 83.

Smith also forwarded other Syrians’ comments on Mishaqa’s writings to the author. See Smith to Mishaqa (June 4, 1849): ABC 50, Box 1 (HHL).

Mishaqa's spiritual advisor,<sup>253</sup> but also encouraged his work as an author and historian.<sup>254</sup> Some of his works were then published in the American Mission Press.<sup>255</sup> Smith wrote in April 1849:

Highly esteemed, dear brother, sir Mikha'il, ... I was very pleased to receive your letter. ... I read the enclosed sheets with great joy. ... You also mention some mistakes that occurred with the printing of your text. ... You can be sure that we will make every effort to ensure that no further mistakes occur. ...<sup>256</sup>

In addition, Smith distributed printed copies of a book by Mishaqa on a trip to Jerusalem, in order to spark discussion. "On my trip, I distributed copies of the first part of your book in Jerusalem and Jaffa. I found that those who were enlightened (*al-mutanawwirin min al-nās*) were very pleased by it, and I hope that they will find it useful."<sup>257</sup>

For John Wortabet, Smith was at once a teacher, mentor, and friend. Between 1848 and 1856, they corresponded regularly. Besides the usual reports on work, Wortabet's letters also contained personal notes about the families of both men. Wortabet, who always signed his letters "your obedient Servant," was grateful for the productive exchange with the experienced missionary: "I beg to express my sincere thanks for all your kind wishes and interest in me. It is a great consolation, as it is a blessing for me to think that I enjoy an interest in the prayers of such men as yourself; and I hope that I may still continue to enjoy the same."<sup>258</sup>

According to Henry Harris Jessup, a classic Arabic letter consisted of three parts:

[A] long, flowery, poetical introduction covering one-third of the page, a similar conclusion covering the last third, and a brief letter in the middle. Important business, however, was written in a postscript diagonally across the right hand bottom of the page, and this was the part generally read by the receiver.<sup>259</sup>

Long letters with little content, as well as diagonally written notes, can be found in Smith's collected letters. Smith, too, occasionally adopted a flowery, somewhat

253 Smith to Mishaqa (April 16, 1849): ABC, Box 1 (HHL): "You will be guided by your wisdom and your sense of justice, which you defend without fear. With the help of God's spirit, you will triumph over everything that stands in your way."

254 Smith wrote to an unknown addressee in Beirut: "I particularly urged him to the use of his pen in the production of writing that would enlighten the people. This suggestion he felt the importance of, & I think he will attend to it." See Smith (Damascus, December 6, 1848): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1. Mishaqa became an important historian in the second half of the nineteenth century.

255 For example: *al-Dalil ıla Ta'at al-Injil* (Guide for Obedience to the Gospel), Beirut, 1849; *Tabri'at al-Mathum mimma Qadafahu bihi al-Batriyark Maximus Mazlum* (Absolution of the Accused from the Charges of Patriarch Maximus Mazlum), Beirut; 1854; *Kashf 'an Niqab 'an Wajh al-Masih al-Kadhab* (Unmasking the Face of the Anti-Christ), Beirut, 1860. See also Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 4, 299.

256 Smith to Mishaqa (April 16, 1849): ABC, Box 1 (HHL).

257 Smith to Mishaqa (May 14, 1849): ABC 50, Box 1 (HHL). This was probably the text *al-Dalil ıla Ta'at al-Injil* (see note 255 in this chapter), which was in printed in Beirut in 1849.

258 Wortabet to Smith (Hasbeiya, January 13, 1852): ABC 60 (98), (HHL). More on the correspondence between Smith and Wortabet in chapter III, section 2.2.

259 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 115.

circuitous means of expression, similar to letters written by Mishaqa, Bustani, or Yanni. There were many similarities in the salutations and closings used by Smith and his correspondents. Smith usually began a letter with “*Janāb al-akh al-ajl al-muḥtaram*” (Very esteemed, dear brother) or “*Janāb al-muḥib al-ā’z al-muḥtaram*” (Very esteemed, dear friend). Mishaqa likewise began with “*Janāb sayyidī al-muḥtaram*” (Very honored sir). Then Smith continued with further words of greeting: “*Nuḥib taqḏīm kathrat al-ashwāq al-qalbīyya a’ruḏ innahu ...*” (We would like to send many warm greetings [and] I inform [you] that ...). Mishaqa, in turn, wrote: “*Nuḥib hadā wājibāt al-ikrām wa jazīl al-shauq al-wāfir ... a’ruḏ annī ...*” (We would like to convey [our] respect and many warm greetings ... I inform [you] that ...). The words that Smith and Mishaqa used to close their letters were similar as well: While Smith wrote “*Wa atāl Allah baqākum*” (May God grant you a long life), Mishaqa wrote “*Wa dāma baqākum*” (May [HE] allow your life to be long).<sup>260</sup> Although Smith’s Arabic – at least in his letter drafts – was not error-free, he made an effort to adopt typical phrasings and to show that he was an engaged and interested correspondent. Without question, his collected letters are an exceptional testament of transcultural understanding.

#### 10. Final observations

Where are the fingers that created such original work, flying [across the paper] with ink and [writing] truth and wisdom?

Where is the tongue that was familiar to us yesterday as a sweet spring, telling us everything we wanted to hear?

Where is that heart, illuminating us like a star that shines in the darkness?

Where is your great zeal, like that of an army when it fights?

Who else stood with wisdom like yours! Whose discoveries can we rely on now?

Whom can we trust with such heavy load, and who will solve such complicated problems?<sup>261</sup>

Sheikh Nasif al-Yaziji – poet, language scholar, and former helper at the mission press – wrote this eulogy after Eli Smith’s death in January 1857. I have shown here how Smith became a mentor, advisor, and friend to many. This was especially true for his Syrian colleagues at the mission, Butrus al-Bustani and John Wortabet, as will be seen in chapter III. Smith believed that they were the best translators, indispensable to the mission.<sup>262</sup> Smith saw them as able candidates for native pastors, and he urged them to complete their theological training so that they could be ordained.<sup>263</sup> Despite the friendly letters that Bustani and Wortabet exchanged with

260 Smith to Mishaqa (Beirut, March 14, 1853; April 25, 1853; November 11, 1853); Mishaqa to Smith (June 3, 1853): ABC 50, Box 1 (HHL).

261 Eulogy for Eli Smith by Nasif al-Yaziji (1857): ABC 50, Box 1 (HHL).

262 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, March 13, 1856): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (225).

263 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, June 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (199). More on this in chapter III, sections 1.2 and 2.2.

Smith, they differed in their theological understanding of the relationship between missionary and native pastor. Smith hoped that the mission would soon ordain a native pastor, but he also did not want to do away with the highly valuable engagement of American missionaries, as he wrote to Anderson in 1851:

When it has been contended that we should give up our pulpit to a native pastor, and be hearers ourselves, lest if we continue to preach, he in contrast, will not be sufficiently respected to attract an audience, I have objected; because if we, in consequence of our training in a Christian land, and of our careful theological education, are able to preach better than these, at the best, very imperfectly trained preachers, I do not think it right to have our mouths closed in order to carry out a theory.<sup>264</sup>

Despite Smith's piety and his conformity with the theological fathers of the ABCFM, his missionary career was not without contradictions. In 1832, he preached to an American audience:

You go not to study ancient Greece and Palestine, nor present workings of human nature, any farther than you will ever have an occasional regard to the one for the illustration of Scripture, and will find an understanding of the other an essential help to your missionary success.<sup>265</sup>

Nevertheless, in subsequent decades Smith's own studies extended well beyond what was necessary to proclaim Holy Scripture. Smith seemed torn. On his deathbed, he was overcome with guilt because of the many interests he had pursued outside the mission. Not without reason, the editors of the *Missionary Herald* added these words of self-criticism to Smith's obituary: "He had tried, he said, to serve Christ, and had labored long and hard, but his motives, he now felt, had been too often unworthy and selfish."<sup>266</sup>

Smith's former colleague William Goodell, who had moved on to the ABCFM's Armenian mission, expressed his admiration for the knowledge of languages that Smith had acquired through hard work. Goodell also emphasized that Smith's desire to dedicate the same attention to mission work and geographical studies was a constant balancing act: "Sometimes, too, the circumstances of a mission may be such, that is, the religious interest may be so great, and the field so wide, that the translator must at once shut up his books, and go out to help gather the harvest."<sup>267</sup>

One can rightfully assert that Smith played an important role in Syria's cultural awakening of the nineteenth century.<sup>268</sup> The development of American Arabic Type, his work on a variety of Arabic books for the press, and his responsibility for the first Arabic mission journal influenced generations of Syrians. In 1856, he wrote

264 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, June 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (199).

265 Smith, *The Missionary Character*, 6. *Ibid.*, 11: "You must study practically from observation, as well as theoretically from books, the highly artificial attitude in which their false religion has placed them."

266 MH 53 (1857), in: ROS 4, 289.

267 William Goodell, "Memoir" (Constantinople, May 14, 1859): ABC 60, Box 3 (139), (HHL). William Goodell was Smith's colleague in Syria between 1827 and 1828.

268 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 37–38: Smith initiated "a revival of the Arabic language and, with it, a movement of ideas which was to leap from literature to politics and . . . lead to distant results." See also Pritchard, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, 58; Stoddard, "The Rev. Eli Smith," 221.

to the DMG about a volume of poetry by Nasif al-Yaziji that had been published by the American Mission Press (and financed by a private businessman): “Aside from the book’s value in and of itself, this attempt to create a new national literature certainly deserves all possible recognition and support.”<sup>269</sup> Moreover, it should not be forgotten that Smith always saw education and progress within the context of Christian “civilization”; cultural awakening could lead to religious enlightenment. Already in 1829, when he advocated for the production of schoolbooks within the Syria Mission, he argued that subjects like geography and history expanded the mind, training young people “to think for themselves on the subject of religion.”<sup>270</sup>

In light of his contributions to nineteenth-century Oriental studies, and the scholarly network that he encouraged between Syria, Europe, and the United States, Smith can in fact be viewed as the “first true Orientalist.”<sup>271</sup> As later paraphrased by Ussama Makdisi, in 1850 Eli Smith wrote in the *New York Morning Herald* that “‘the Arab race is my favorite’: they had literature and poetry, ‘the soul of sublimity,’ a record of achievement in science, mathematics, philosophy, and history, and an Arabic language that made English sink ‘into insignificance before its beauty and force.’”<sup>272</sup>

In 1843/44, when the future of the Syria Mission was in doubt, the extent of Smith’s identification with his work became apparent. If necessary, he was ready to continue the fight alone: “Abandon Syria! It is a thing I had never dreamed of. Not a single missionary principle I have ever adopted could favor such a step. ... NEVER! ... Here may my last days be spent. If others will hold on with me, well; if not, let me wear out alone.”<sup>273</sup>

## II.2. “[HE] HAD ARABIC AT HIS TONGUE’S AND FINGERS’ ENDS”<sup>274</sup>: CORNELIUS VAN DYCK (1818–1895)<sup>275</sup>

### 1. Biographical overview

Cornelius Van Alan Van Dyck, the son of Dutch immigrants, was born in Kinderhook, New York on August 13, 1818. He studied medicine at Jefferson College in Philadelphia, and he taught chemistry at a girls’ school when he was just eighteen years old.<sup>276</sup> Sent by the Dutch Reformed Church on behalf of the ABCFM, he and

269 Smith to the DMG (Beirut, May 9, 1856), in: ZDMG 10 (1856), 813.

270 “On the Preparation of School-Books for Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs, drawn up by Mr. Smith” (Malta, October 8, 1829): ABC 16.6.3., Vol. 3.

271 Finnie, *Pioneers East*, 196.

272 Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 196, citing from the *New York Morning Herald* (19 May 1850), 1, 3–4, in: Yale Divinity School Library, Special Collections, Eli Smith Family Papers, RG 124, Box 3/2.

273 Smith in MH 39 (1843), in: ROS 3, 377.

274 The description of Van Dyck is by an unnamed Syrian poet. Hall, “The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck,” 285.

275 For a summary of this chapter, see Zeuge-Buberl, “I have left my heart in Syria.”

276 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 104–5.

other new missionaries arrived in Syria on April 1, 1840.<sup>277</sup> He initially served as a mission doctor, completing his theological training with his missionary colleagues. He was ordained in 'Abeih on January 14, 1846.<sup>278</sup> He later received a doctorate in theology,<sup>279</sup> a doctorate in literature,<sup>280</sup> a bachelor's degree in law, as well as an honorary doctorate in humanities.<sup>281</sup> Van Dyck made a name for himself in Syria in many different fields of activity. Between 1846 and 1850, he directed the mission seminary in 'Abeih and worked on numerous textbooks in Arabic. Together with William M. Thomson and John Wortabet, he established Protestant congregations in Sidon, Hasbeiya, and the surrounding area. He continued the Bible translation after Eli Smith's death, finally completing it in 1865. He directed the American Mission Press for many years, saving it from closure. Between 1866 and 1883, he taught medicine and astronomy at the Syrian Protestant College. In addition to this work, for decades he was a practicing medical doctor, scholar, author, and translator.

In 1842 Van Dyck married Julia Abbot, the daughter of deceased English consul, and they had six children.<sup>282</sup> He passed away at the age of seventy-seven, from heavy intestinal bleeding caused by typhus, on November 13, 1895.<sup>283</sup> Hundreds accompanied the funeral procession of the best known American missionary in Syria. (Figure 5)

2. "Our policy has been a contracting not an extending policy"<sup>284</sup>:  
Van Dyck and the Syria Mission

Cornelius Van Dyck arrived in Syria in 1840, when he was just twenty-one years old. He and Henry De Forest, who arrived in 1842, were to serve as mission doctors in order to address the great need for medical care, both within and outside the

277 MH 36 (1840), in: ROS 3, 222.

278 MH 42 (1846), in: *ibid.*, 482.

279 He received this degree from Rutgers College in New Jersey, during his residence in New York in 1865. See Union Theological Seminary, *Alumni Catalogue*, xxx.

280 *Ibid.*: He received this degree in 1890, also from Rutgers College.

281 He received the final two degrees from the University of Edinburgh, including the honorary doctorate in 1892. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 73; Union Theological Seminary, *Alumni Catalogue*, xxx.

282 Julia Abbott lived from 1827 to 1918. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 107; Sa'di, "Al-Hakim Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck," 39–40; Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 252. The children were named Henry Laurence (1843–1883), Edward Abbott (1846–19??), William Thomson (1857–1939), Ellen Maria (1848–1849), Eliza Ann, or Lizzie († 1936), and Florence Katherine (1871–1908). William Van Dyck studied at the SPC, and he later taught there for several years. Between 1920 and 1927, he was professor of zoology at the renamed American University of Beirut. In 1870/71, his older brother Edward taught English and Latin at the SPC. See SPC annual report (June 27, 1871): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 18. Edward later worked as a translator at the American consulate in Beirut, as a vice consul in Cairo, and as a teacher in an Egyptian government school. See Union Theological Seminary, *Alumni Catalogue*, 52.

283 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 110.

284 Van Dyck to Anderson ('Abeih, August 17, 1850): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (320).



Figure 5: Rev. Cornelius Van Dyck, M.D., D.D., L.H.D.

mission.<sup>285</sup> “American medicine at the time was hardly ‘scientific’; doctors still bled patients for all manner of ailments so that the American doctor had little edge over the native practitioner,” writes historian ROBERT L. DANIEL.<sup>286</sup> Van Dyck was an average doctor; he had not studied theology, nor was he fluent in Arabic. This would all change soon.

Van Dyck’s first months in Syria, however, were extraordinarily difficult and hardly seemed promising. After only a short time, he complained to Rufus Anderson that he was completely overworked. Patients came to see him day and night, and his own health was worsening steadily. As a mission doctor, he reported extensively on the ailments of his colleagues, which were physical as well as mental. It is evident that the Americans suffered not only from the change in climate, but also from exhaustion due to overwork. Anderson had little empathy. Already in 1841,

285 Murre-van den Berg identifies this as a trend towards secularization in the Middle East missions. Providing medical treatment, which also brought Muslims into contact with the mission, “required a different type of missionary, a woman or man who had been educated as a doctor or teacher, not as minister or evangelist.” See the introduction to *New Faith in Ancient Lands*, 8.

286 Daniel, “American Influences in the Near East before 1860,” 82.

Van Dyck requested permission to travel back to the United States in order to have a urethral stricture properly treated.<sup>287</sup> The Prudential Committee turned down his request. Because Van Dyck sent few letters to Boston during his first years in Syria, he hardly appeared in the *Missionary Herald*,<sup>288</sup> and Anderson repeatedly reminded the young missionary to write more regularly and report on his work.<sup>289</sup> Van Dyck explained: “It has been no want of respect, which has influenced me, nor has it been indolence; but simply an unwillingness on my part to inflict upon others an illegible scroll of trite expressions, or information, previously communicated by others.”<sup>290</sup> However, Van Dyck was not the only missionary who rarely fulfilled his reporting duties. When Anderson returned from his trip to the Levant in 1844, he wrote to the entire Syria Mission: “If you will have the churches take a deep interest in your mission you must take pains to write frequently and with care, for publication. There is no use in reasoning against this necessity, and a wise man will not attempt it.”<sup>291</sup>

Since the mission needed every person to participate in the work of evangelism, the American Board recommended that the mission doctors Van Dyck and De Forest complete additional theological studies, so that they could also work as preachers.<sup>292</sup> It had, in fact, been the wish of Van Dyck’s father, a country doctor, that his son become a pastor. However, a young Van Dyck had had other plans and decided to study medicine.<sup>293</sup> Syria offered him a second chance, and he started anew with theological study. The decision to be ordained did not come easy. One year before his ordination, he wrote to Anderson: “At present my whole heart is drawn towards the sacred office. But the required qualifications, the responsibilities, the magnitude of work are points which make me hesitate.”<sup>294</sup> His will to share the message of Jesus Christ was ultimately stronger than his doubts about meeting the demands of this office. Van Dyck’s doubts were not unfounded. The demands on him as a doctor and a cleric were so high that he repeatedly fell ill.<sup>295</sup>

With the opening of the mission seminary in ‘Abeih,<sup>296</sup> Van Dyck discovered his passion for teaching. He had already taught chemistry at a girls’ school in the United States. Now he became the director of an entire seminary, organizing the curriculum together with Butrus al-Bustani, who had been a close friend since

287 Van Dyck to Anderson (Deir al-Qamar, August 6, 1841): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 2 (204). That same year, the Syria Mission wanted to station him in Aleppo, although this never came to pass. See MH 37 (1841), in: ROS 3, 306.

288 A first personal note dates from 1847, seven years after Van Dyck’s arrival in Syria. See MH 43 (1847), in: ROS 4, 2–4.

289 Van Dyck to Anderson (Aitāt, September 5, 1842): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 2 (206); Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, October 30, 1845): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 3.1. (142).

290 Ibid.

291 Anderson to the Syria Mission (On board the Turkish steamer, April 23, 1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.

292 Ibid.

293 Anderson, “Memorandum of Discussions with the Missionaries during my visit to the Levant in 1843–1844”: ABC 30.10., Vol. 3, 34 (HHL).

294 Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, October 30, 1845): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 3.1. (142).

295 Van Dyck to Anderson (‘Abeih, October 5, 1847): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (314).

296 See chapter I, section 1.4. The missionaries Whiting and Thomson, and Van Dyck as mission doctor, were tasked with building a station in ‘Abeih in 1843. See MH 39 (1843), in: ROS 3, 384.

1841. Bustani instructed the students in arithmetic, Arabic grammar, and vocabulary (“necessary on account of the scarcity of dictionaries in the language”),<sup>297</sup> and Van Dyck taught geography and Bible studies. As already mentioned, at first the mission did not have its own textbooks, except for a single book on Arabic grammar. Textbooks were compiled over the course of instruction, which meant that presenting the material often took twice as long. The instructors themselves had to study a great deal, “to ensure the necessary accuracy in thus composing text books for [the] future.”<sup>298</sup> During this period Van Dyck worked on schoolbooks in geography, algebra, geometry, logarithms, trigonometry, and natural philosophy. Jessup later recalled:

His geography of Turkey, Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine, is a thesaurus of graphic description, and full of apt quotations in poetry and prose from the old Arab geographers and travellers. The people delight in it and quote it with admiration. I found it to be one of the best possible reading books in acquiring a knowledge of the Arabic vocabulary.<sup>299</sup>

Van Dyck’s colleague Simeon H. Calhoun officially became the seminary’s director in 1849, although Van Dyck did not want to give up teaching. Several of his colleagues likewise opposed the American Board’s decision to send the missionary and doctor to Hasbeiya or Damascus, so that he might help to build new stations there. Van Dyck was concerned about Calhoun’s ability to continue the courses at the same level. He had, after all, taught the entire first two years of students, even designing the textbooks himself. According to Van Dyck, Calhoun did not know the correct terminology, nor did he possess the knowledge for an entire year of instruction.<sup>300</sup> In the seminary’s first four years, its reputation had become intertwined with Van Dyck’s name; Syrians near ‘Abeih saw this as a guarantee for quality and a good education. Van Dyck was well aware of this, and he argued that Calhoun ought to make a name for himself first, before assuming the seminary’s leadership. The talented mission doctor had spent ten years in Syria; he was self-confident and sure of his abilities. Van Dyck knew that he could not stay at the seminary forever, but with respect to the mission’s current strategy that was set by the American Board, he stated: “Under the present system I am unwilling to go to Damascus, Hasbeiya or any where else either permanently or temporarily. Under a free system (you will not misunderstand the expression) I am ready to go where it shall be thought best.”<sup>301</sup>

The “free system” that Van Dyck mentioned concerned the mission’s relationship with native converts and newly founded congregations, as explained in chapter I, section 1.3. The problem lay, in part, with the missionaries’ overly strict standards for testing the piety of applicants for the Protestant church. In addition, there was the view that congregations still dependent on the Americans’ financial assistance should be subject to the mission’s unlimited control. In a letter marked “private”

297 Van Dyck to Anderson (‘Abeih, November 9, 1846): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (315).

298 Ibid.

299 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 107. There is more on the geography book (*Kitab al-Mir’at al-Wadiyya fi l-Kurat al-Ardiyya*, first edition in 1852) in appendix I.

300 Van Dyck to Anderson (‘Abeih, August 17, 1850): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (320).

301 Ibid.

from August 17, 1850, Van Dyck spoke candidly about his opinions, which differed substantially from those of other colleagues. It was not Anderson who demanded the strict relationship with native Protestants and congregations. Rather, he consistently advocated for filling churches and ordaining native pastors. Many other missionaries, however, harbored doubts about the applicants' spirituality. Van Dyck responded that the lack of confidence in the new converts was unfounded: "there is no want of confidence."<sup>302</sup> Clearly, evidence of sufficient piety was a necessary condition for membership in the Protestant church. The native Protestants agreed, but they also believed that the standards for this evidence had to be set in a different way. Approaches to faith were different from culture to culture. Van Dyck agreed: "Again we (the missionaries) are foreigners – our support, our connections, our friends, our ideas and ways of thinking, our education . . . , are foreign – we are not the men to set our judgement upon this people. . . . [A] certain religious experience to which we have been accustomed" should not be demanded from the Syrians in the same way.<sup>303</sup> The apparently insufficient piety worried many missionaries that placing greater responsibility in the hands of Syrian Protestants might lead to their independence too quickly. The missionaries preferred to err on the side of caution, maintaining the close connection between church and mission. By 1848, these circumstances had depleted the pool of potential candidates for the position of native pastor. Bustani, Wortabet, and others took issue with the restrictions on their freedom. Native helpers grew discouraged, believing that the mission would turn them down for higher positions or even dismiss them. Instead of growing, the congregations lost members. Instead of native pastors, the congregations continued to be led by American missionaries. Van Dyck's assessment was frank: "Our policy has been a contracting not an extending policy, we cut off native helpers here and there, and pray that the Lord would raise up laborers into the harvest."<sup>304</sup>

Anderson had not precisely defined the standards by which a "credible profession of piety" could be measured. His missionaries in Syria tended towards overzealousness, since in 1844 Anderson had unmistakably explained to them that "the Mission could not be maintained a year, if it were known that they received persons to the ordinances on other grounds than a credible profession of faith."<sup>305</sup> Another event seems only to have strengthened some of the missionaries' resolve. During Anderson's visit to the Levant in 1843/44, the tactics of the mission were debated at length, including a particular case from 1839. The missionaries Thomson, Hebard, and Lanneau had decided to baptize a group of Druzes who saw themselves as converts, without having received evidence of their piety. Unlike Anderson and his travel companion Dr. Hawes, as well as the missionaries Whiting, De Forest, and

302 Ibid.

303 Ibid.

304 Ibid.

305 Anderson to the Syria Mission (On board the Turkish steamer, April 23, 1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8. Anderson's concerns were grounded in part on the reports of Samuel Wolcott, who was stationed in Syria between 1840 and 1843. Wolcott's observations of the members of the mission church were almost entirely negative; few were pious or demonstrated a particularly noble character. See Wolcott to Anderson (Beirut, June 1, 1842): ABC 16.5., Vol. 3.

Smith (“He fears the effect of introducing men who are not pious”),<sup>306</sup> Van Dyck took Thomson’s side, arguing that rejecting the group would completely disillusion the converts. They had left their community of faith, and if they were rejected by the missionaries, they would have no religion. The mission doctor argued that they should be accepted into the mission church, under the condition that they would receive further instruction in Protestant teachings.<sup>307</sup> Van Dyck and Thomson advocated for the individual evaluation of each convert, since general rules did not always apply to the specific circumstances of a given case. For Anderson, this went too far. In the official record of the discussions, Anderson added the following comment in parentheses to Van Dyck’s words:

[He appears to favor the administering (of) the ordinances to men before they give good evidence of piety. He would have a much lower degree of evidence, and would make baptism a means of bringing men out, and making nominal Christians. He would administer the ordinance of baptism to those who declare their belief in Christianity, and so become the means of making them disciples and bringing them under instruction.]<sup>308</sup>

In Anderson’s opinion, the Eastern Christians had a highly dangerous view of baptism, “as they believe in its regenerative power, and it will never be proper for us to yield to this error or countenance it in any way.”<sup>309</sup> Syria did not need more nominal Christians, particularly ones who called themselves Protestants. When Anderson departed in 1844, he was convinced that all differences of opinion had been resolved.<sup>310</sup> Nevertheless, the missionaries in Syria continued to take a conservative approach towards the demonstration of piety in the years to come. The ABCFM secretary saw that his plan for independent native Protestant congregations in Syria was in danger.<sup>311</sup> As already mentioned, Van Dyck warned that the mission’s approach would result in the loss of congregation members and pastoral candidates. Anderson reiterated his views to the mission, as in this personal letter to Van Dyck:

It seems to me that we must run risks. ... We must run risks in admitting native converts into the church – in ordaining them as ministers, and as pastors – in setting them up as organized and recognised Christian churches, with places of worship and a stated native ministry.<sup>312</sup>

Anderson’s words seemed to have some effect. The mission concentrated its hopes in John Wortabet, who was ordained as an evangelist in 1853.<sup>313</sup> In 1851, Van Dyck

306 Anderson, “Memorandum of my visit to the Levant”: ABC 30.10., Vol. 3, 17–21 (HHL).

307 Eli Smith disagreed, although he (like almost all of the missionaries in Syria) argued that the group in Hasbeiya should still be cared for: “Christian marriage and burial we could give to all; but baptism and the Lord’s supper were only for those whose hearts were renewed by the Holy Ghost, which there was no reason to believe was now the case with any of them.” See MH 41 (1845), in: ROS 3, 400.

308 Anderson, “Memorandum of my visit to the Levant”: ABC 30.10., Vol. 3, 15 (HHL).

309 Anderson to the Syria Mission (On board the Turkish steamer, April 23, 1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.

310 Ibid.

311 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, June 27, 1850): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 13 (HHL).

312 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, July 11, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8 (4). See also Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, June 27, 1850): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 13 (HHL).

313 More in chapter III, section 2.2.

was ready to be transferred. After plans to establish a permanent station in Damascus fell through,<sup>314</sup> he was stationed in Hasbeiya (and lived in Sidon), along with his father-in-law and colleague William M. Thomson<sup>315</sup> and family. Wortabet assisted them both, concentrating particularly on building the congregation in Hasbeiya.

Van Dyck's contentment with work in Sidon and the surrounding area seemed to last for only a short time. In 1851, a general letter from Anderson to the Syria Mission informed Van Dyck and Thomson that the Prudential Committee was considering lowering their pay because there would be fewer expenses in Sidon. Van Dyck's income would be reduced from \$1050 to \$850 per year,<sup>316</sup> and then to \$700 per year a few months later.<sup>317</sup> Van Dyck was insulted. To begin, Anderson had announced these plans in an impersonal letter to all the missionaries. In addition, Van Dyck accused Anderson and the Prudential Committee of a lack of trust:

Do you suppose that, after a years residence in Sidon, if I had found that my family could be comfortably supported on \$600 or \$700 I would still asked [*sic*] for \$850? I cannot believe that there is a missionary in the service of the Board in whom you have so little confidence.<sup>318</sup>

Because this would not be enough to support his family, he asked the Prudential Committee to give him sufficient notice before such steps were taken, so that he could make the necessary preparations and possibly take on an additional job.<sup>319</sup>

Van Dyck had to leave Sidon in 1857, in order to continue the Bible translation in Beirut. He would have liked to work from Sidon, but this was not possible. William Eddy, who succeeded Van Dyck and Thomson in Sidon, had difficulty building a relationship with the people of Sidon because they had held Van Dyck in such high esteem.<sup>320</sup> The missionary and doctor regretted leaving his post in the south of Syria, although he understood the importance of his coming assignment in Beirut, and that he alone could continue the translation work: "I have left a pleasant residence, an interesting field, a delightful work, for the whirl of the multitude, the case hardened and the dusty roads and lanes of Beirut. Neither personally nor as regards

314 Representatives from the Church Missionary Society were already stationed in Damascus.

Their mistrust of the Americans, whom they saw as unwelcome competition, apparently contributed to the failure of the Americans' plans. Native Protestants in Damascus, however, were dissatisfied with these missionaries and appealed to the Americans for assistance. See Van Dyck to Anderson ('Abeih, November 12, 1847 and July 28, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (323 und 324); Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, July 11, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8 (4); Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, November 6, 1851): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 15 (HHL).

315 This relationship came about because Thomson married the widow of the English consul Peter Abbott in 1835. In 1842, Van Dyck married her daughter Julia. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 107.

316 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, July 11, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8 (4).

317 Van Dyck to Anderson (Sidon, February 11, 1852): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (326).

318 Ibid. A letter from Anderson to the Syria Mission dated October 1, 1851 indicates that Van Dyck's income was to be set at \$775, despite his objections. By contrast, Eli Smith, as the head of the Syria Mission, was to receive \$1000. ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 2.

319 Van Dyck to Anderson (Sidon, February 11, 1852): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (326).

320 "Without doubt they are, for the present, disappointed and grieved at Dr. Van Dyck's removal," Eddy wrote in MH 54 (1858), in: ROS 4, 299.

my family am I pleased with the change.”<sup>321</sup> As the cultural center of Syria, Beirut would, however, provide him with the opportunity to develop his talents further and become more than a mission doctor.

Among Van Dyck’s new responsibilities was the directorship of the American Mission Press. It was now up to him to fight for the continued existence of the press, which the American Board was seeking to close. Only the ongoing Bible translation, as already described, could justify keeping the press open for the next several years. Even Van Dyck recognized the hopelessness of the situation, writing in 1857: “I hope the time is not far distant when we shall be able to dispose of the whole printing establishment and have all our work of this kind done outside the Mission.”<sup>322</sup> At first he argued against moving the press to the mountains, as the ABCFM planned. “The press is at present and for years has been, the only hold we have upon Beirut.”<sup>323</sup> It was the only means of distinguishing the American missions from others like it.<sup>324</sup> Nevertheless, Anderson and the Prudential Committee did not change their minds. Financial support for the press had been greatly reduced, with a large portion of printing costs now covered by the European and American Bible societies.<sup>325</sup> The missionaries were running out of books. Orders came in from throughout Syria and abroad; textbooks in grammar, geography, and reading were continually sold out.<sup>326</sup> Moreover, the new Bible translation could be printed only after the procurement of a new printing press, since the old one now produced so many mistakes.<sup>327</sup> There was no end to Van Dyck’s requests and desperate questions (“What shall we do?”).<sup>328</sup> His desperation turned into truculence: “Cut down! – Cut down!” This is how he portrayed the board’s demands to reduce the work of the press. Without approval, the press was not allowed to use the money earned from book sales for printing new books. In 1864, Van Dyck cynically asked who would even notice if the money were just to be spent on urgently needed books. He added: “Will the P[rudential] C[ommittee] give the permission asked and allow us to print one Hymn Book with clear consciences; or shall we have to do it without such permission and guilt our consciences as we best can?”<sup>329</sup> Van Dyck could no longer understand the methods of the ABCFM. Missionizing and educational

321 Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, October 31, 1857): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (344).

322 Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, October 31, 1857): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (344). By the end of the nineteenth century, the American press was managed by an independent businessman, although it was still owned by the mission. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 631.

323 Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, October 31, 1857): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (344).

324 Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, June 14, 1862): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (498).

325 Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, January 25, 1868): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (515): “The Board has given us the pittance of \$1000 perhaps sometimes much less . . . we have never had enough to keep alive anything more than a miserable one.”

326 Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, July 24, 1861): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (495): “But as there seems little prospect of enlarging, can we not be kept going at least at the rate at which we have been moving for several years past. Quite a number of our standard works which are daily called for are out of print & we have not the means to issue new editions.”

327 Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, May 15 and June 14, 1862): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (497 and 498).

328 Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, July 24, 1861): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (495).

329 Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, August 30, 1864): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (501).

work on site could not continue without books on theology, Bibles, and hymnals. Van Dyck presciently recognized that the Americans' accomplishments in printing would outlast all other efforts of the Syria Mission:<sup>330</sup> "By the end of another quarter of a century, the only means the American Board will have for impressing the then living and the future generations of the Arabic speaking races will be the Christian literature which it has been and shall be the means of producing."<sup>331</sup>

Completion of the Bible translation provided Van Dyck with an opportunity to return to the United States between 1865 and 1867, and also to gain some distance from the Syria Mission and its problems. While he supervised the preparation of metal plates for the Arabic Bible in New York, he accepted a part-time teaching position in Hebrew at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He also brought his medical knowledge up to date, and he earned a doctorate in theology at Rutgers College in New Jersey.<sup>332</sup> Van Dyck made an outstanding impression at Union Theological Seminary, where he was offered a professorship. After two years away from Syria, however, his choice for the future was clear: "I have left my heart in Syria and thither I must return."<sup>333</sup> In Syria, there had been concerns for some time that Van Dyck would remain in the United States. In 1866, the missionaries wrote to Van Dyck that the weakened state of the mission and the depressing situation made his presence in Syria indispensable.<sup>334</sup>

When Van Dyck finally returned in 1867, new disagreements with the leadership of the ABCFM had emerged. The missionary society wanted to "re-Americanize" (as Van Dyck called it) the girls' boarding school that was directed by Mikha'il 'Araman.<sup>335</sup> The native school's leadership and faculty were Syrian, and it was financially independent, but in 1867 it faced both financial and personnel problems. The American Board proposed to support the school and provide American teachers. Van Dyck countered:

Then it's to come back an Americanized school – supported in large part at least by the Board? ... I call it a failure, and I'd rather shut up or give the building to the Syrian Protestant College than to try to make an Americanized female boarding school of it. ... If we can do anything towards making them support their own institutions let us do it.<sup>336</sup>

American leadership was no guarantee of success, Van Dyck continued. After all, the girls' boarding school directed by De Forest was forced to close in 1854. The ABCFM was prepared to compromise. Additional donations from the United States and from tourists travelling through Syria would allow the school to maintain its

330 At the end of the nineteenth century, the press was doing better than ever. In a speech honoring Van Dyck's fifty-year anniversary in Syria, William Eddy proudly reported that in the meantime the press had four steam-powered and six hand-powered printing presses. See Presbyterian Church in the USA, "Dr. Van Dyck's Semicentennial," 290.

331 Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, August 30, 1864): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (501).

332 Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, April 17, 1867): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (514); Union Theological Seminary, *Alumni Catalogue*, xxx.

333 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 108.

334 Clark to Van Dyck (Boston, August 15, 1866): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 31 (HHL).

335 See appendix II, no. 9.

336 Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, January 25, 1868): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (515).

independence. A few European or American teachers would round out the native faculty, but Arabic would remain the language of instruction. After many years of independence, the girls' school was later given over to the care of the Presbyterian Women's Board of Missions.<sup>337</sup>

Van Dyck presumably welcomed the new professional opportunities at the Syrian Protestant College, where since the end of 1867 he had worked together with John Wortabet to establish a medical department. In 1867, Van Dyck discussed his additional income from the college<sup>338</sup> with Nathaniel Clark, who had become the new ABCFM secretary in 1866. Nevertheless, in 1869 Van Dyck was again accused of receiving too much income from the SPC. He announced that if his already low pay from the ABCFM were reduced further, he would accept more work at the college.<sup>339</sup>

Van Dyck had expected much more from the Syria Mission, and he was disappointed for many reasons. Mission work in Syria had meant a great deal to him, as he wrote in his farewell letter to the administration of the American Board in 1869.<sup>340</sup> When asked whether he wanted to end his ties to the ABCFM, dedicating himself entirely to the SPC, he replied, "No! I have served the Board 30 years . . . and I hope to die in its service."<sup>341</sup> If Van Dyck sensed discord, he knew to keep his composure. When the *Missionary Herald* printed Van Dyck's farewell letter in an 1870 issue, it omitted an important sentence. In the newspaper, one can read "Now the tie is severed! . . ."<sup>342</sup> In fact, in his letter to Secretary Clark, Van Dyck added: ". . . and the question of remaining in connection with the Mission is an open one."<sup>343</sup>

In 1870, Daniel Bliss reported that Van Dyck was now in the position to accept a full professorship at the Syrian Protestant College – indicating that Van Dyck would no longer be employed by the Syria Mission.<sup>344</sup> He directed the American Mission Press through the early 1870s, and he occasionally fulfilled the tasks of an ordained pastor.<sup>345</sup> He did not, however, break off contact with the Syria Mission, which continued to value his services and accomplishments in the field of education.

337 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 225–26. Miss Eliza D. Everett directed the female seminary (later renamed the American School for Girls) between 1868 and 1895. See Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 237 (no. 16).

338 In fact, Van Dyck asked Bliss for significantly less pay than his other colleagues at the college. Instead of \$1000, he received \$800. See 'Ajuluni, "Qissat al-Duktur Kurmiliyus Fan Dayk," 6.

339 Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, February 24, 1869): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2 (519).

340 Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, August 31, 1870): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (520).

341 Ibid.

342 MH 66 (1870), in: ROS 5, 254.

343 Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, August 31, 1870): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (520).

344 SPC annual report (June 24, 1870): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 14. Makdasi commented that Van Dyck "repudiated what he saw as missionary arrogance." (*Faith Misplaced*, 46)

345 Because of Van Dyck's ailing health, in 1871 the SPC faculty discussed relieving him of his duties at the press. See "Minutes of General Faculty" (November 15, 1871): AA.3.4.2. The anniversary report of the American Mission Press from 1923 contains contradictory statements about how long Van Dyck actually directed the press. In the statistics, he is listed as the director from 1857 to 1870. (PBCFM, *Centennial of the American Press*, 39) In the historical overview, Rev. March discusses meeting with Van Dyck in the press's new building in 1873. Van Dyck was in his office, busy with bills and correspondence, writing and proofreading. (Ibid., 6–7)

### 3. Completion of the Arabic Bible

If Eli Smith proved his linguistic talents among the first generation of American missionaries, Van Dyck carried on this legacy in the second generation, continuously perfecting his command of the Arabic language. Between 1840 and 1857 he studied Arabic with Nasif al-Yaziji, Butrus al-Bustani, and Yusuf al-Asir; his wife Julia assisted him with conversational, everyday usage.<sup>346</sup> Van Dyck was proficient in ten languages, including Syrian, Hebrew, Greek, French, Italian, and German.<sup>347</sup> His students later recalled that he always had a notebook by his side, in which he and Nasif al-Yaziji recorded excerpts of Arabic poetry and *qasā'id*. He recited regularly from the notebook on various occasions.<sup>348</sup>

It is not at all surprising that, after Smith's death, the mission chose Van Dyck to complete the translation of the Bible. Van Dyck was Smith's favorite student, the only author whose works could go to press without first being proofread by Smith.<sup>349</sup> Already in 1851, Anderson had suggested that Van Dyck, because of his familiarity with Arabic poetry, might help with the translation of poetic Bible texts like the Psalms and Job.<sup>350</sup> However, because Van Dyck had other responsibilities as a missionary and mission doctor, he became involved with the translation project only after Smith's death. Instead of Nasif al-Yaziji (whose work Smith had grown dissatisfied with) and Butrus al-Bustani (who was now busy with other work), Van Dyck hired the Muslim scholar Yusuf al-Asir to be his assistant. The Syrian, who was raised in Sidon, had studied law and Islamic theology at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Active in the intellectual circles of Egypt and Syria, al-Asir had previously worked for the Ottoman government and taught Arabic, including at the National School founded by Bustani in 1862.<sup>351</sup> He was one of the first Muslim intellectuals to become active in the Christian-dominated cultural movement in Syria.<sup>352</sup> Van Dyck, who was impressed by al-Asir and his linguistic talents,<sup>353</sup> intentionally sought a Muslim collaborator: "I preferred a Muslim to a Christian, as coming to

346 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 106; Tibawi, "The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College," 265; Kades, *Die arabischen Bibelübersetzungen im 19. Jahrhundert*, 55.

347 Sarruf and Nimr, "al-Marhum al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustani," 2; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 73.

348 From a speech by Y. Sarruf, given at the dedication of busts of Van Dyck and Wortabet in 1913, in: *al-Kulliyā* 4, no. 6 (1913), cited in: Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu'assasun li l-Jamī'a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 177. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 107: "He soon mastered the best productions of Arabic poetry and literature, and by his wonderful memory could quote from the poetry, proverbs, history and science of the Arabs in a way which completely fascinated the Syrian people."

349 Hall, "The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck," 285. On his deathbed, Smith expressed his exceptional gratitude to Van Dyck for his care and regular visits: "Obituary Notice of Rev. Eli Smith D.D.": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (227).

350 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, July 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8 (4).

351 Zaydan, *Tarajim Mashahir al-Sharq fi l-Qarn at-Tasi' Ashar*, 149.

352 Binay, "Revision of the manuscripts of the 'so-called Smith-Van Dyck Bible,'" 82; Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, 145.

353 *Ibid.*

the work with no preconceived ideas of what a passage ought to mean, and as being more extensively read in Arabic.”<sup>354</sup> Al-Asir was tasked with proofreading Van Dyck’s translations and reformulating foreign expressions.<sup>355</sup> In addition to al-Asir, Van Dyck presumably employed other, unnamed proofreaders who helped to complete the Bible translation.<sup>356</sup> In 1861, Van Dyck wrote to Anderson that, because of the strenuous work, he would hire more assistants if he could.<sup>357</sup>

As already mentioned, Smith’s draft of the New Testament was almost unusable because it was not based on the *textus receptus*.<sup>358</sup> Nevertheless, Van Dyck wanted to acknowledge the work of his predecessor. He obtained permission from the American Bible Society (the funder of the translation project) to mention the existence of additional Greek, Syriac, or Arabic manuscripts that departed from the accepted Greek text in the translation’s footnotes. “I availed myself largely of this permission,” he later recalled.<sup>359</sup> In this way, the current research and textual criticism that Smith did not want to neglect was incorporated into the translation. Van Dyck also adopted Smith’s practice of sending translation drafts to a variety of readers. A circle of about thirty people – including missionaries in the Arab world, native scholars, as well as Arabists in Germany – regularly received proofs for correction.<sup>360</sup> In a letter to the American Bible Society, Van Dyck commented: “These all come back with notes and suggestions, every one of which must be well weighed. Thus a critic, by one dash of his pen, may cause me a day’s labour, and not till all is set right, can the sheet be printed.”<sup>361</sup> According to new research by the Arabist SARA BINAY, Van Dyck’s translation of the gospels corresponds with Smith’s version more than ninety-five percent of the time, more than previously assumed: “There is proof that Cornelius Van Dyck really reread their translation but only in a few cases did he have to implement corrections, some based on his comparison with the recognised Greek text and some in matters of Arabic style.”<sup>362</sup>

354 Hall, “The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck,” 280.

355 Sa’di, “Al-Hakim Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 28. Van Dyck’s letters to the ABCFM and his official reports on the Bible translation do not provide more specific information about Yusuf al-Asir or their collaboration. Even Jurji Zaydan – historian, author, and Van Dyck’s former student – does not mention the Bible translation in his short biography of Yusuf al-Asir. See *Tarajim Mashahir al-Sharq fi l-Qarn at-Tasi’ Ashar*, 148–50.

356 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 106.

357 Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, July 24, 1861): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (495).

358 See chapter II, section 1.4.

359 Hall, “The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck,” 279.

360 No information is available on Smith’s circle of proofreaders. The German-speaking Arabists included Prof. Fleischer (Leipzig), Prof. Rödiger (Halle, Berlin), Prof. Flügel (Dresden), as well as Dr. Behrmayer, who worked at the imperial library in Vienna. See “Dr. Van Dyck’s History of the Arabic Translation of the Scriptures, March 7th, 1885,” in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 28.

361 Cited in: Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 75.

362 Binay, “Revision of the manuscripts of the ‘so-called Smith-Van Dyck Bible,’” 81. By contrast, in 1885 Hall wrote: “From various sources I have learned that the New Testament translation of Dr. Eli Smith was actually not used by Dr. Van Dyck.” See “The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck,” 282.

With respect to Arabic style, Smith had set a clear precedent. All of the missionaries agreed that a simple, pure Arabic, “free from foreign idioms,” was the best solution. Adopting the style of the Koran (“*i. e.*, Islamic, adopting idioms and expressions peculiar to Mohammedans”) had been considered, but Van Dyck reported that *all* Christian scholars had opposed this.<sup>363</sup> Those responsible for the Bible translation felt strongly that the poetic and very complex Arabic language of the Koran – accessible only to the highly educated, with words that had long fallen out of use – should be replaced with a simpler Arabic that was comprehensible to all. A more elevated register was chosen only for the poetic parts of the Bible, so that these would correspond to the style of the original Greek or Hebrew texts.<sup>364</sup>

The New Testament went to print in the spring of 1860. Several different persons suggested that Van Dyck should also publish a vocalized edition of the New Testament. One reason for this was to model the vocalized Koran, in order to reach Muslims more easily. Another was so that the vocalized text could be used in schools, to promote correct pronunciation.<sup>365</sup>

Continuing to work on the Old Testament proved to be an arduous task for Van Dyck. He traveled to Austria and Prussia in 1869, so that he could speak with Orientalists in Vienna, Leipzig, Dresden, and Halle about difficulties with the text.<sup>366</sup> On August 23, 1864, Van Dyck finally finished translating the last sentence of Malachi. His son Edward later recalled that on this evening he had been waiting for his father, who stepped out onto the balcony of the house and said: “Edward, it is finished. Thank God! What a load is off me! I never thought I was going to live to finish this work.”<sup>367</sup>

The first complete edition of the Arabic Bible was published in March 1865. By the arrangement of the pages, it is even possible to recognize where Smith’s translation ended and Van Dyck’s began.<sup>368</sup> In the summer of 1865, Van Dyck traveled to New York to commission the production of metal plates for printing the Bible faster.<sup>369</sup> Through electrotyping, the plates could be reproduced and used over and over – allowing the Bible to be widely distributed. The British and Foreign Bible Society received a copy of the plates. By 1910, around thirty-two editions and more

363 “Van Dyck’s History, 1885,” in: Smith and Van Dyck, *Brief Documentary History of the Translations of the Scriptures*, 28.

364 Ibid.

365 Van Dyck to Rev. Doct. Brigham (Beirut, December 31, 1857): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (345). See also Sa’di, “Al-Hakīm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 29: “In works of great importance, such as the Qur’ān (or Korán), or of especially high quality, such as the acknowledged peaces of Arabic literature, *all* the vowel-points, short as well as long, must be fully indicated.”

366 Sa’di, “Al-Hakīm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 28–29. Van Dyck’s membership in the DMG encouraged communication with the German Orientalists. This scholarly exchange came to a standstill after the transfer of the mission to the Presbyterian Board. See Kawerau, *Amerika und die Orientalischen Kirchen*, 422.

367 Hall, “The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck,” 286.

368 Ibid., 280–81.

369 The process that Van Dyck called “electrotype printing” was based upon the technique of etching. Using manual and electric tools, characters were carved into a metal plate of copper or zinc and then immersed in an acidic solution. See Grabowski and Fick, *Drucktechniken*, 103–6.

than 900,000 individual copies of the Smith-Van Dyck Bible had been printed.<sup>370</sup> The printed Arabic Bible of the Americans was one of the most read versions of Holy Scripture of its era.<sup>371</sup> As explained in chapter II, section 1.4, this Bible was not a classic translation from the text's original languages; it incorporated the phraseologies of existing Arabic manuscripts so that the reader might encounter them anew.

Two other Arabic Bible translations were undertaken in the nineteenth century, but these were not nearly as popular as the Americans'. Around the same time as Eli Smith, Faris al-Shidyaq and the Englishman Samuel Lee began to translate the English King James Bible into Arabic, as commissioned (primarily) by the Church Propagation Society. Although this version was printed in London in 1851 and 1857, it was not widely used.<sup>372</sup> In 1881, the Jesuits brought out a translation that was largely completed by Ibrahim al-Yaziji, son of the scholar Nasif al-Yaziji. Van Dyck recognized few differences between al-Yaziji's text and his own translation: "It is a fair translation generally, and only differs in very slight particulars from mine (so far as I have traced it), ... and that only for the sake of differing from the Protestant Version."<sup>373</sup> However, Van Dyck was incorrect. The Jesuit Arabic Bible was not a revision of the Smith-Van Dyck Bible, but an independent translation. Although it shared many similarities with the Protestant Bible,<sup>374</sup> it departed from this translation in numerous places with its smooth, more sophisticated Arabic. More expressive but also not as closely bound to the original texts, this version was particularly favored in intellectual and scholarly circles.<sup>375</sup>

Even the Orthodox churches in Syria and the Coptic Christians in Egypt used the American Bible translation.<sup>376</sup> The Maronite church, by contrast, has continued to use the Jesuit version up through the present day. Today, the Smith-Van Dyck Bible still serves as the Protestant "*textus receptus*" in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Israel.<sup>377</sup> Although Van Dyck persisted in crediting Smith's authorship at every opportunity,<sup>378</sup> Smith's pioneering accomplishments were increasingly overlooked. The missionaries' collaboration with the Syrian scholars al-Yaziji, al-Bustani, and al-Asir – which contributed significantly to perfecting the translation – received

370 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 77.

371 Glaß, *Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut Again*, 26. After his return from the United States in 1867, Van Dyck said: "No literary work of the century exceeds it in importance and it is acknowledged to be one of the best translations of the Bible ever made." See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 77.

372 Hall, "The Arabic Bible of Drs. Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck," 279.

373 Van Dyck, in: *ibid.*, 280.

374 Binay, introduction to *Translating the Bible into Arabic*, 13–14.

375 Glaß, *Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut Again*, 27; Thompson, *The Major Arabic Bibles*, 29–31.

376 In an 1865 public speech, the Greek Orthodox priest and scholar Jubrin Jubara declared: "They have given us a translation so pure, so exact, so clear, and so classical, as to be acceptable to all classes and sects." See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 78.

377 Grafton, *Piety, Politics and Power*, 88.

378 Sarruf and Nimr, "al-Marhum al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustani," 4; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 109.

even less acknowledgment.<sup>379</sup> The Arabic Bible translation of the American missionaries eventually became known as simply the “Van Dyck Bible.”

#### 4. Al-Ḥakīm

Many Arabic authors who have written about Van Dyck’s life and work call him *al-Ḥakīm*, the wise. The title was traditionally used for medical doctors who also worked in other scientific fields, as was often the case in the Middle Ages. The title was appropriate for Van Dyck, who was well-versed in medicine, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, theology, and law.

His greatest accomplishments were scientific and scholarly, defined by rational thought. According to his student Jurji Zaydan, he never allowed his religious faith to intrude upon this work.<sup>380</sup> When the Syria Mission identified a lack of materials throughout the educational sector, Van Dyck made this cause his own. His advocacy for education in the natural sciences was without parallel in Syria. Even today, his name figures prominently in Arabic historiographies of the nineteenth century.

In 1853, the JAOS published Van Dyck’s article about the current state of the medical profession in Syria.<sup>381</sup> The article demonstrated his thorough knowledge of the history of Arab medicine,<sup>382</sup> as well as his ongoing research into the manuscripts of classical scholars like Avicenna, Abucasis, Avenzoar, Averroes and Rhazes.<sup>383</sup> Although Avicenna was still very influential among Arab doctors, Van Dyck was not able to locate any complete manuscripts of his works.<sup>384</sup> There were, however, translations of Greek scholars like Hippocrates, Aristotle, Paracelsus, and Galen, whose influence was just as great. Van Dyck remarked critically that merely owning such manuscripts was often enough to be considered a doctor in Syria.<sup>385</sup> Medical knowledge in the Arab world was in a rudimentary state.<sup>386</sup> Ignorance, incorrect treatments, and the superstition that autopsies mutilated the dead, although they might precisely explain the reasons for illness,<sup>387</sup> inspired Van Dyck’s own mission to reinvigorate medical science in the region. “The West has plundered the East of a large part of its literature,” Van Dyck wrote in his article for the JAOS.

379 Binay, “Revision of the manuscripts of the ‘so-called Smith-Van Dyck Bible,’” 83–84.

380 Philipp, *Ġurġī Zaidān*, 34.

381 Van Dyck, “On the Present Condition of the Medical Profession in Syria,” 561–91.

382 Among other works, he studied Ibn Khallikan’s “Memoirs of the eminent men of Islamism.” *Ibid.*, 562.

383 *Ibid.*, 561.

384 He did own an Arabic edition of Avicenna’s “Canon” that had been printed in Rome in 1593. From a speech by Y. Sarraf, given at the dedication of busts of Van Dyck and Wortabet in 1913, in: *al-Kullīyya* 4, no. 6 (1913), cited in: Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu’assasun li l-Jamī’a al-Amīrikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 177.

385 Van Dyck, “On the Present Condition of the Medical Profession in Syria,” 570.

386 Medical knowledge in America and Europe at this time also did not yet meet standards of modern medicine. In many cases, mission doctors still practiced bloodletting. See Daniel, “American Influences in the Near East Before 1860,” 82.

387 Van Dyck, “On the Present Condition of the Medical Profession in Syria,” 574–78.

By reprinting the treasures of Arab scholars, European presses had helped to preserve them and ensure their accessibility in the libraries of Europe.<sup>388</sup> To speak of “plundering” is appropriate only insofar as these new editions did not find their way back to the Arab world. The neglect of education under Ottoman rule likewise played a role. The first medical schools were established in Egypt only during the early nineteenth-century reign of Muhammad ‘Ali, through the influence of the French. By the mid-nineteenth century, graduates had translated more than sixty well-known European works into Arabic.<sup>389</sup> Although well-to-do Syrians studied at these schools, the lack of knowledge about medicine in Syria remained widespread until the middle of the nineteenth century. According to Van Dyck, the Egyptians’ translations were not well executed, with insufficient consideration given to Arabic terms for sicknesses and medical conditions. These translations introduced Western terms for sicknesses where Arabic counterparts already existed. In other cases, Western terms were transliterated in such a way that they could no longer be recognized by European or Arab readers.<sup>390</sup> The use of Latin terms was unavoidable for new scientific discoveries, but Van Dyck strove to find adequate Arabic words for previously known conditions.<sup>391</sup> By republishing al-Razi’s manuscript on smallpox and measles (*Kitab fi l-Jadari wa l-Hasba li l-Razi*) in 1872/73, Van Dyck wanted to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of this ninth- or tenth-century work, as nineteenth-century practitioners of Western medicine had again begun to use the methods of treatment it described.<sup>392</sup> In the book’s introduction, Van Dyck credited al-Razi as the first person to write about these diseases. Van Dyck clarified expressions that had fallen out of use, and he corrected al-Razi’s medical interpretations wherever they deviated from current scientific standards. Finally, Van Dyck added a bibliography of Greek works that had been translated into Arabic.<sup>393</sup>

Van Dyck’s work as an author was not limited to the field of medicine. In forty years, he wrote or translated around thirteen theological texts, and around twenty-three<sup>394</sup> non-fiction works on geography, geology, algebra, geometry, chemis-

388 Ibid., 569.

389 Sa’di, “Al-Hakim Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 22.

390 Van Dyck, “On the Present Condition of the Medical Profession in Syria,” 570.

391 For example, *khounāq* (diphtheria): see Jaha, *Nashar Makhtuṭa “Amrad al-‘Ayn” bi-Beyrut*. Khuri, *Al-Duktur Kurniliyus Fan Dayk*, 108–9: Van Dyck consulted numerous Arabic manuscripts in order to compile a selection of specialized terms. For a general analysis of the methods of translating scientific terminology into Arabic, and the problems that can occur, see M. S. Elshakry, “Knowledge in Motion: The Cultural Politics of Modern Science Translations into Arabic,” *ISIS* 99, no. 4 (2008): 701–30.

392 Van Dyck, “On the Present Condition of the Medical Profession in Syria,” 562. In the new edition of al-Razi’s work, Van Dyck explained that the medical practitioners of past centuries had moved away from the methods of treatment suggested by al-Razi, introducing new ones that often led to death. The nineteenth century saw a return to methods described by al-Razi. See Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk, Mu’alafat al-‘Ilmiyya al-‘Arabiyya,” 399.

393 Ibid., 398–400.

394 There is not an exact number, in part because his authorship of some works has not been clearly established (see appendix I). There are also three unpublished manuscripts (*Tibb al-‘Ayn* [Ophthalmology]; *al-Bathulujiyya al-Mardiyya* [Pathology of Disease]; *al-Bathulujiyya al-‘Ama* [General Pathology]). See Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 418. For the manuscript “*Amrad al-*

try, physics, astronomy, poetry, and dialectics. Only a few were pure translations. Most were compilations of already familiar and current scientific facts; Van Dyck wrote an original introduction to each, explaining its importance to readers.<sup>395</sup> He constantly worked to harmonize familiar Arabic vocabulary with the different sciences. This is readily evident in his geography textbook from 1851, *Kitab al-Mir'at al-Wadiyya fi l-Kurat al-Ardiyya* (literally, “The clear mirror that reflects the earth,” or “a clarification of geography”), which also demonstrates his affection for poetic titles. To facilitate readers’ comprehension of new terms, he often provided synonyms – such as *jabal al-nār* (fire mountain) and *barkān* (volcano), or *al-baḥr al-muḥīt* and *al-ūqīyānūs* (ocean).<sup>396</sup> Foreign proper names were partially translated and transliterated (*nahr al-missīsibī* [Mississippi River], *jabal al-alb* [Alpine mountains]). In other textbooks – including *Usul al-Kimiya* (Fundamentals of Chemistry, 1869) and *Usul 'Ilm al-Hai'a* (Fundamentals of Astronomy, 1874) – he was able to incorporate existing terminology because of his familiarity with the works of Arab scholars from the Early Middle Ages. (For example: *al-kibrūt* = sulfur; *al-fidḍa* = silver; *zi'baq* = quicksilver; *uṭārid* = mercury) He transliterated only those terms that were completely unknown in the Arabic-speaking world.<sup>397</sup> With older or lesser known Arabic phrases, Van Dyck included explanatory comments. Many of his books became reference works for students of all grade levels. These books not only provided current information about scientific developments, but also demonstrated the continued relevance of Arab scholars from past centuries. In his last book, which he published about astronomy in 1893,<sup>398</sup> he noted that his listing of Arab scholars (many of whom had lived in the Abbasid era) included only a small portion of those who had helped to advance science within the Arab world.<sup>399</sup>

Van Dyck’s manuscript about eye diseases (*Amrad al-'Ayn*) was newly printed in 1992, on the occasion of the AUB’s 125th anniversary and the opening of an eye bank at the university’s medical center.<sup>400</sup> An article about the manuscript, which appeared in the newspaper *al-Anbiya'* (1992), emphasizes the author’s ingenuity. Van Dyck had to introduce new terms for the various eye diseases, since he could not refer to any other work from past centuries. The prevalence of eye diseases among the Arab population alerted Van Dyck to a lack of specialized knowledge. On his first trip to the United States, he learned more about the field of microscopy and brought the first microscope to Syria.<sup>401</sup> On his second trip, when he resided in New York for two years (1865–1867), he paid for additional training in ophthalmology with income from his professorship at Union Theological Seminary.<sup>402</sup>

'Ayn,” see below. Glaß (“Der Missionar Cornelius van Dyck,” 187) refers to twenty-nine Arabic books and twenty articles in Arabic periodicals.

395 In “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” Khuri discusses Van Dyck’s introductions to each work.

396 *Ibid.*, 390–91.

397 *Ibid.*, 398 and 402.

398 *Kitab Aru' al-Tama min Muhasin al-Qubba al-Zarqa'* (literally, “Extinguishing the thirst for the beauty of the heavens”). For more, see appendix I.

399 Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 416.

400 This was a center for cornea transplants.

401 Sa'di, “Al-Hakīm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 29; Penrose, “*That they may have life*,” 37.

402 Sa'di, “Al-Hakīm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 29.

Van Dyck presumably wrote the manuscript in the years thereafter, when he was teaching at the SPC. It is not known why the manuscript was never published, since need for such a textbook clearly existed. Significantly, Van Dyck did not neglect the potential of traditional remedies. He not only introduced around forty new chemical medications for eye ailments and explained the anatomy of the eye; he also discussed popular remedies in Syria, often involving plants and herbs, in order to analyze their efficacy. In a 1992 article, JURJ JAHA noted that Van Dyck's language and specialized terminology would not have been easily comprehensible to readers who were not well versed in formal Arabic.<sup>403</sup>

Van Dyck's introduction of specialized terminology into Arabic, and the spread of his textbooks throughout Syria, and even into Egypt and Persia, meant that the mission doctor exerted a formative influence on several scientific fields within the Arab world. Already in 1876/77, the first volume of *Muqtataf* (edited by Van Dyck's students Ya'qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr) featured the same illustrations and chemical terminology as Van Dyck's textbook *Usul al-Kimiya* (1869).<sup>404</sup> Glaß has, for example, noted that both publications use *haidrūjīn* (or *hīdrujīn*) for "hydrogen," *ḥāmiḍ haidrūklūrīk* for "hydrochloric acid," and *tabalwara* for "crystallizing."<sup>405</sup> Thus, the journal played a role in the transfer of specialized scientific terminology into the vocabulary of generally educated readers. Van Dyck's textbooks were not only used in Syria, but also in Egyptian schools and at Cairo's Al-Azhar University, since his former students who edited *Muqtataf* helped to popularize the new textbooks in Egypt.<sup>406</sup>

There was hardly a Syrian periodical with Christian publishers that did not publish articles by Van Dyck. The mission doctor and scientist was also a popular author. Van Dyck wrote numerous articles for the journal *al-Jinan*, which was founded by his longtime friend Butrus al-Bustani in 1870. Van Dyck used the encyclopedia-like periodical as a platform for his scientific findings in fields like chemistry and biology.<sup>407</sup>

In his adopted homeland, Van Dyck realized his scholarly ambitions most fully at the Syrian Protestant College. Together with John Wortabet, he established the college's medical department; George Post joined them later.<sup>408</sup> Van Dyck initially taught botany and chemistry three times each week.<sup>409</sup> He later lectured on internal

403 Jaha, "Nashar Makhtuṭa 'Amrad al-'Ayn' bi-Beyrut."

404 Glaß, "Der Missionar Cornelius van Dyck," 193–94; Glaß, *Der Muqtataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, 220 (figure 20): the barometer from Van Dyck's chemistry book (p. 12); *ibid.*, 221 (figure 21): the barometer illustration in *al-Muqtataf* 1 (1876/77), 36–37.

405 *Ibid.*, 204: Likewise, *Muqtataf* borrowed terms for ocean and volcano (see above) that were used in the geography book. For more on this topic, see Glaß, "Der Missionar Cornelius van Dyck," 193–94.

406 Sa'di, "Al-Hakim Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck," 36.

407 See, for example, "Aujuh al-Mushabiha beyn al-Hayawan wa l-Nabat," (External Similarities Between Plants and Living Beings) *al-Jinan* 1 (1870), 10–11; "Fi Bitruliyyum ay al-Kaz," (Petroleum as a Gas) in: *ibid.*, 468–70; "al-Zayt al-Amrikani," (The American Olive Tree) in: *ibid.*, 77–79, 112–14, 140–41, 174–75, and 208–11.

408 SPC annual report (June 24, 1868): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 2.

409 Khuri, "Nashat al-Duktur Kurniliyus Fan Dayk," 22.

medicine, pathology, and theology,<sup>410</sup> and Edwin Lewis and George Post assumed responsibility for chemistry and botany. Van Dyck transformed another one of his passions into an avocation in 1873, offering instruction in astronomy and meteorology with a telescope that he had acquired himself.<sup>411</sup> He found a peaceful respite in observing the stars and measuring changes in climate.<sup>412</sup>

Since the establishment of the medical department, the college presided over a kind of clinic that gave students the opportunity to acquire practical experience.<sup>413</sup> Because eye diseases were common among the population at this time, many patients came to the SPC clinic with similar symptoms. This situation, exacerbated by the clinic's inability to admit patients who had traveled a long distance, inspired Van Dyck's 1869 proposal for a specialized eye clinic that would be affiliated with the college. That same year, the Brown Ophthalmic Hospital was established with the help of monetary donations from the United States, obtained through Van Dyck's appeal to Dr. Adams at the Madison Square Church in New York.<sup>414</sup> Van Dyck became its director.<sup>415</sup> SPC annual reports do not indicate whether or not the hospital was linked administratively and financially with the college. The eye clinic apparently lasted for only a short time, because in 1871 Van Dyck initiated negotiations to cooperate with the Prussian hospital of the Johanniter Order, which had opened in 1866.<sup>416</sup> The Kaiserswerth deaconesses, who had served in Beirut in 1862, assumed responsibility for the hospital in 1867.<sup>417</sup> From this point forward, professors at the college worked regularly at the hospital, and medical students had the opportunity to gain professional experience there.

Despite his intensive engagement on behalf of the college, Van Dyck insisted upon receiving the same pay as his colleagues.<sup>418</sup> As he himself stated, the well-being of the SPC was near and dear to his heart. Even at the expense of his own health,

410 After the merging of the 'Abeih academy and the college in 1881, Van Dyck also lectured in natural theology and Old Testament exegesis. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 496.

411 Van Dyck is frequently celebrated for covering a large part of the costs to establish the chemistry laboratory and the observatory, although instructors in other disciplines made similar contributions. The young college did not have the financial resources to meet all of its professional needs, so it relied on the generosity of its professors. See SPC annual report (June 1869): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 7. Because Van Dyck owned the telescope, the Board of Trustees purchased it from him after his resignation in 1882 (see below). See SPC annual report (July 10, 1883): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 77.

412 Sa'di, "Al-Hakîm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck," 32.

413 SPC annual report (June 24, 1868): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 3.

414 See Van Dyck's letter to the college faculty (Beirut, February 6, 1869), cited in: SPC annual report (June 24, 1870): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 14–15.

415 Van Dyck to the president and faculty of the SPC (February 6, 1869), in: SPC annual report (June 1869): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 9.

416 The institution was frequently called the Johanniter hospital, although it was no longer managed by the German order. The Johanniter first established a men's hospital in Sidon in 1861. It moved to Beirut in 1862, eventually closing because of insufficient funds. In 1866, the Johanniter hospital reopened in Beirut. See Kaminsky, *Innere Mission im Ausland*, 34.

417 SPC annual report (June 27, 1871): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 20–21; Penrose, "That they may have life", 34–36.

418 Philipp, *Gurğî Zaidân*, 179.

he was prepared to dedicate every minute towards its progress.<sup>419</sup> Van Dyck's students admired his knowledge, his generosity, and his efforts to ensure that their studies were successful. Thomas Philipp has written that "the students adored van Dyck; they praised his virtues, merits and kindness."<sup>420</sup> His reputation extended beyond the walls of the college. He was widely believed to have founded the SPC, which was sometimes called *Madrasat Fāndayk* (Van Dyck School).<sup>421</sup> The gap that remained after Van Dyck's departure in 1882 could not be filled by a new instructor. It seems surprising that an institution as renowned as the SPC would let go of its best instructor, holding fast to its religious principles. The circumstances that led to the resignations of Van Dyck, William Van Dyck,<sup>422</sup> and chemistry and geology professor Edwin Lewis had to do with the scandal surrounding Lewis's commencement address (described in chapter I, section 1.5). The new teachings of the British researcher Charles Darwin touched off a conflict between liberal and conservative factions at the SPC. Darwin's theory of evolution did not shake Van Dyck's religious convictions. As a scientist, he felt obliged to respect this theory and engage with it rationally.<sup>423</sup> The freedom of thought and expression that he espoused to his students was at stake.<sup>424</sup> In this regard, he was well ahead of his conservative colleagues. Van Dyck's decision to give up his teaching position was certainly not caused by these events alone. His letter of resignation, written to the Board of Trustees in New York on December 18, 1882, states:

The course taken by Dr. Bliss and Dr. Post for some time past in College matters, and the fact that I differ from them radically as to the principle which should guide the Faculty in the management of so important an institution, have led to such a divergence between us, that, finding myself powerless to remedy a state of things which I truly deplore, I can no longer consistently retain my connection with the College.<sup>425</sup>

Even before the events surrounding Edwin Lewis's speech, numerous factors had contributed to an impending crisis at the college – beginning with the administration's objections to Lewis's behavior, although his relationship with Daniel Bliss had not been troubled during his first years at the college.<sup>426</sup> In addition, there was

419 Van Dyck, in: Sarruf and Nimr, "al-Duktur Kurniliyus Fan Dayk," part 1, 886.

420 Philipp, *Ġurġi Zaidān*, 179.

421 From S. al-Din al-Munajjid, ed., *Mudhakirrat Jurji Zaydan* (Beirut, 1968) 65, cited in: Juha, *Darwin wa Azma 1882 bi l-Da'ira al-Tibbiyya*, 54.

422 Penrose, "That they may have life," 36–37: William studied at the SPC between 1875 and 1878, completing his studies at New York University's medical college. SPC annual reports do not indicate when he was hired as an instructor.

423 As stated by Jurji Zaydan in: Philipp, *Ġurġi Zaidān*, 180.

424 From *Mudhakirrat Jurji Zaydan*, 273, cited in: Khuri, *al-Duktur Kurniliyus Fan Dayk*, 164: According to Zaydan, in the college's early years it was not at all unusual to express one's opinion freely and to stand up for one's rights. Thus, the student protests related to the Lewis affair were not particularly surprising.

425 Cited in: "A Statement. 1883 by the President to the Board of Managers": ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 74.

426 In letters written to his wife Abby between 1873 and 1874, Bliss did not criticize Lewis at all: "Dr. Lewis is most faithful in all his duties. And helps in matters that do not especially belong to his department." See Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (Beirut, December 10, 1873), in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 137–38.

a rivalry between George Post, who was unpopular with the students,<sup>427</sup> and the renowned Cornelius Van Dyck.<sup>428</sup> William Van Dyck's personal contact with Charles Darwin, and his enthusiasm for Darwin's ideas, added to the tensions.<sup>429</sup> Finally, Cornelius Van Dyck's position at the college was in itself a problem in the eyes of conservatives. As a proponent of rational thought, he did not hide behind religious fanaticism. He spoke openly about matters that his colleagues did not dare to address.<sup>430</sup> Bliss complained repeatedly about the liberal professors' attitudes towards David Stuart Dodge, who was a member of the Board of Trustees in New York as well as Bliss's close friend.<sup>431</sup> When Van Dyck learned that Bliss had discussed internal conflicts at the college with Dodge,<sup>432</sup> without first consulting the faculty or the Board of Managers, he was incensed and complained to the Board of Trustees on several occasions.<sup>433</sup> Dodge wrote to Bliss that he should not be intimidated by Van

Nevertheless, Lewis – like Van Dyck, a passionate scientist and ordained pastor – espoused views that opposed the college's strict religious rules. Board of Trustees member David S. Dodge threatened to fire Lewis for serving wine at a dinner. See Dodge to Bliss (Bushy Hill, July 5, 1882): AA.2.3.1.4.2 (“It would be desirable for the College if he could find some other sphere of usefulness, but we must quietly wait.” See also Juha, *Darwin wa Azma 1882 bi l-Da'ira al-Tibbiyya*, 56–58. According to Jurji Zaydan, Lewis occasionally skipped the mandatory devotions: *Mudhakirrat Jurji Zaydan*, p. 66, cited in: Juha, *Darwin wa Azma 1882 bi l-Da'ira al-Tibbiyya*, 57.

427 Bliss described Post as an extremely dedicated colleague (“his energy and thoroughness make the Medical Department”), who did not tolerate carelessness in the work of others. But Post's determination, and the many plans that he had crafted for the SPC's future, could also be exhausting (“One [Post] is quite enough – two would drive all things to a ‘general smash.’”). See Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (Beirut, November 14, 1873), in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 118; Bliss to Abby (Beirut, November 27, 1873), in: *ibid.*, 128–29. Disagreements between Post, Lewis, and Van Dyck apparently emerged early on. Daniel Bliss reported that Post had once scolded Van Dyck and Lewis for not speaking loudly enough in their sermons. By contrast, Post could understand Bliss's every word: see Bliss to Abby (Beirut, November 9, 1873), in: *ibid.*, 115.

428 A. Rustum, *Lubnan fi 'Ahd al-Mutasarrifiyya* (Beirut, 1973), 254, cited in: Juha, *Darwin wa Azma 1882 bi l-Da'ira al-Tibbiyya*, 55.

429 Juha, *Darwin wa Azma 1882 bi l-Da'ira al-Tibbiyya*, 58–60.

430 *Ibid.*, 60.

431 In 1873, Dodge stayed with Daniel Bliss for some time while his family was away. At first Dodge taught English at the SPC, but he later left Syria, much to Bliss's regret. (“He will never know how much I shall miss him” [June 21, 1873], in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 34.) From that point forward, they corresponded regularly about both personal and professional matters. As a sign of great respect, Bliss always called him “the Professor.” See Bliss to Abby (June 4, 1873), in: *ibid.*, 23. A large part of the correspondence in Daniel Bliss's papers, which are kept in the AUB archive, consists of letters from David Stuart Dodge.

432 Dodge to Bliss (Watch Hill, August 21, 1882): AA.2.3.1.4.3: Although the Board of Managers in Beirut was responsible for setting salaries at the college, Bliss and Dodge corresponded about the raises that the Board was considering for the tutors Sarruf and Nimr. Dodge wrote: “The increase of the Tutor's salaries is certainly unnecessary. I fear it is only done to give false hopes to these young men or to embitter them against those, who will oppose the proposition and so to bind them more closely to a party!”

433 Lewis, too, complained about this issue: Dodge to Bliss (Weatogue, Connecticut, July 19, 1882): AA.2.3.1.4.2. See also: Juha, *Darwin wa Azma 1882 bi l-Da'ira al-Tibbiyya*, 60–61.

Dyck's impulsive behavior, or by his complaints at a mission station meeting about the "burning wrongs at Râs-Beirût" and the "terrors of more resignations and wholesale desertions." With respect to the talented young William Van Dyck, Dodge was not convinced that he possessed a spirit of mission that was appropriate for the college. "If difficulty would come from rejecting him, I have little doubt, more would eventually come from accepting him."<sup>434</sup> He advised Bliss to take things slowly, if necessary with less personnel: "Better run at half-speed . . . than make sixteen knots with the aid of atheistic, materialistic or non-religious boilers."<sup>435</sup>

The SPC was reluctant to lose its best professor. From New York, members of the Board of Trustees attempted to persuade Van Dyck to apologize; a statement of regret about the recent events would have been enough to rehabilitate him.<sup>436</sup> Dodge encouraged Bliss to negotiate with Van Dyck:

No matter what he may think personally of Darwinism etc., he may be able to see and feel that an Institution like this College is already and absolutely committed to an outspoken and unquestionable orthodoxy etc.etc. . . . We do not want to separate from such a man as Dr Van Dyck hastily. We want, if possible, to save him from the disgrace and injury to himself and the cause, of deserting the college on any such ground. He must strain every nerve to prevent such a catastrophe for a man whose name for learning and piety is known throughout the World.<sup>437</sup>

Bliss tersely replied that the conditions Van Dyck had set for his return were "inadmissible."<sup>438</sup> In the case of William Van Dyck, the Board of Trustees was happy to receive his resignation. None of the resignations were unexpected, and they were met with little regret from the college and its administration, both in Beirut and abroad. Cornelius Van Dyck no longer shied from confronting the college's conservative faction. He advised his companions to distance themselves from the pastors<sup>439</sup> and their false, exaggerated piety. Holding fast to their religious principles, they denounced as secular any scientific approaches to thought that seemed to contradict them.<sup>440</sup>

The American Richard Brigstocke, who taught obstetrics and pediatric medicine, left his position in March 1883,<sup>441</sup> leaving the college to manage the absence of four instructors. The institution's reputation depended upon finding successors in a timely way, so that students could complete their degrees.<sup>442</sup> Already in 1882, Van Dyck promised his students that if they were suspended from the college, he would instruct them privately at his home. Bliss believed this to be a rumor, but Van Dyck proved him wrong.<sup>443</sup> Van Dyck, his son William, and Edwin Lewis ultimately

434 Dodge to Bliss (Bushy Hill, August 1, 1882): AA.2.3.1.4.3.

435 Ibid.

436 Ibid.

437 Dodge to Bliss (Watch Hill, August 21, 1882): AA.2.3.1.4.3.

438 "A Statement. 1883 by the President to the Board of Managers": ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 74.

439 By this, Van Dyck presumably meant not only missionaries, but also instructors at the college who were likewise affiliated with the mission (such as Daniel Bliss).

440 Khuri on the reasons that moved Van Dyck to resign ("Nashat al-Duktur Kurniliyus Fan Dayk," 20).

441 Brigstocke to Bliss (March 5, 1883): AA.2.3.1.9.4.

442 "A Statement. 1883": ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 75.

443 Ibid., 72.

helped twelve suspended students prepare for the medical exam in Istanbul.<sup>444</sup> According to an official statement from the college president in 1883, the certificates that Van Dyck presented to the students would not be recognized in Istanbul, so students would have to return to the college in order to take their exams.<sup>445</sup> By contrast, Jurji Zaydan wrote in his biography that a committee made up of Van Dyck, Lewis, Wortabet, Brigstocke, and two Syrian doctors gave the students their exams, so that they ultimately could receive their diplomas in Istanbul.<sup>446</sup> As the college's diplomatic representative, George Post sought to prevent this by interceding with the medical department in Istanbul – apparently without success.<sup>447</sup>

A professor who could present the complexity of Van Dyck's subject matter in Arabic was never found. As a result, the 1874 decision to adopt English as the main language of instruction<sup>448</sup> was extended to the medical faculty in 1883. It has often been assumed that Van Dyck, along with his colleague John Wortabet and others,<sup>449</sup> opposed the transition to English because he had mastered Arabic so thoroughly.<sup>450</sup> Protest against the transition, first expressed in a letter from the missionary William Eddy on July 30, 1878, has been wrongly associated with Van Dyck. The fact is, however, that Van Dyck participated in all of the committees that advised in this matter. As acting SPC president during Daniel Bliss's absence between 1874 and 1876, he even led some of the committees.<sup>451</sup> Van Dyck and his son William both signed the majority decision in favor of English.<sup>452</sup> The medical faculty had been hesitant to implement the transition, since it might have negatively impacted young doctors practicing among the Arabic-speaking population. With the departure of several instructors who were fluent in Arabic, however, there was no longer any reason to delay the adoption of English as the language of instruction throughout the entire college.

Van Dyck earned his reputation as al-Ḥakīm likewise as a practicing doctor. The sending of doctors as missionaries was an established component of foreign missions. Mission doctors not only fostered better access to the population; they also introduced the latest medical innovations to a native population whose health care was usually provided by laypeople. Time and again, the Americans were at

444 The later historian Jurji Zaydan was among them.

445 "A Statement. 1883": ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 75.

446 Philipp, *Ḡurḡī Zaidān*, 203.

447 Scholz, *Foreign Education and Indigenous Reaction*, 169; Khalaf, "New England Puritanism and Liberal Education in the Middle East," 74.

448 Juha, *Darwin wa Azma 1882 bi l-Da'ira al-Tibbiyya*, 152.

449 More on this in chapter III, section 2.4.

450 Glaß writes that Van Dyck, Faris Nimr, Ya'qub Sarruf, and others spoke out against English in 1879 (*Der Muqtataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 2, 438). This was true for Nimr and Sarruf, who discussed the decision in *al-Muqtataf* (see chapter I, section 1.5), but not for Van Dyck.

Years earlier, Van Dyck had consistently emphasized the necessity of mastering English to his secondary school and seminary students. While the ABCFM sought to avoid English as a language of instruction, Van Dyck argued that English was more valuable than Latin. See Van Dyck to Anderson ('Abeih, October 5, 1847): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (313); Van Dyck to Rev. L. Bacon (Sidon, June 14, 1856): *ibid.* (342).

451 Daniel Bliss to Abby (Beirut, January 25, 1874), in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 177.

452 Juha, *Darwin wa Azma 1882 bi l-Da'ira al-Tibbiyya*, 163–64.

the forefront of medical developments in Syria – with Cornelius Van Dyck leading the way. Through the end of the nineteenth century, Christian European societies took it upon themselves to enhance the social sector with hospitals, clinics, and schools for nurses.<sup>453</sup> Van Dyck persistently lobbied to establish a clinic or hospital in association with the college. The college's dispensary eventually became the Brown Ophthalmic Hospital, although its fate is now unknown. Cooperation with the Prussian Johanniter hospital was established in 1871.<sup>454</sup> The respected doctor held office hours twice a week, which were always well attended. Although Van Dyck left the college in 1882 and the cooperation agreement was only valid for SPC instructors, he was nonetheless permitted to continue working in the hospital for some time.<sup>455</sup> In his 1883 statement about the events at the SPC, Daniel Bliss wrote that a local newspaper had reported that Van Dyck and Lewis had helped to establish a new native hospital. Fears that Van Dyck's institution would compete with the hospital of the SPC quickly faded when the hospital in question closed its doors after only three weeks. The reasons were not given.<sup>456</sup> Bliss's comments about where Van Dyck did continue to practice are highly contradictory. It can be determined, however, that after 1882 Van Dyck entered into a new agreement with the Rum Orthodox St. George Hospital in Beirut.<sup>457</sup> The hospital's annual report from 1885 relayed the praise that the American doctor received for his professional and humane engagement. He treated his patients not only with medicine, but also with words of comfort.<sup>458</sup> According to the report, patients sometimes saw him as Moses. Van Dyck dedicated himself to the Rum Orthodox hospital for another ten years.<sup>459</sup> Although he lived two miles from the hospital, the now elderly doctor made the journey several times each week. He paid for a new wing of the hospital from his own pocket, so more patients could be treated.<sup>460</sup>

Not only the college, but also the mission, was disappointed that Van Dyck had taken up with "the enemy." He was damaging the legitimacy of the American mission, as William Eddy wrote to the PBCFM on February 18, 1882: "We are terribly hampered in our dealings with the natives by the course of Dr. Van Dyck. An open enemy would do us less harm. ... He opposes our choicest plans. ..."<sup>461</sup> By 1890, however, these annoyances appeared to be forgotten. On the fiftieth anniversary of

453 The social gospel movement started in the United States in the 1860s. More in C. H. Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865–1915* (New Haven, 1940).

454 See chapter I, section 1.5.

455 SPC annual report (December 15, 1883): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 82. By contrast, Jessup writes that Van Dyck was no longer able to work in the hospital (*Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 666). This statement may refer to a long-term working relationship with the hospital. Contradictory statements in different documents about this topic are not unusual.

456 "A Statement. 1883": ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 74.

457 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 109; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 245.

458 Matar, "al-Duktur Kurniliyus Fan Dayk," 38. There is a mistake in Matar's dating; the committee met in 1885, not 1875.

459 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 109.

460 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 667.

461 W. W. Eddy (Beirut, February 18, 1888): PBCFM archive, Index VII (64), cited in: Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 245.

his residence in Syria, the Syria Mission presented Van Dyck with special editions of all his works in Arabic. In his book *Fifty-Three Years in Syria* (1910), Henry Harris Jessup spoke enthusiastically of Van Dyck's work for the Rum Orthodox hospital: "[He] aided not only in raising its character, but in inducing the wealthy Syrian Greeks to contribute to its enlargement and its higher efficiency."<sup>462</sup> Jessup reported that the hospital honored Van Dyck's anniversary by installing a marble bust of the doctor in its courtyard. "It was the first memorial bust in Syria in modern times, and the Greek Society have shown great liberality and sincere gratitude by setting it up to commemorate the labours and life of an American Protestant missionary physician."<sup>463</sup>

Representatives of many of different confessions and institutions in Syria paid their respects to Van Dyck during the celebrations of 1890, although there were no official congratulations from Daniel Bliss and the college faculty.<sup>464</sup> In the end, however, Van Dyck was distinguished enough that the SPC did not want to lose its connection to him. In 1913, two busts honoring him and Wortabet were unveiled on the grounds of the SPC.<sup>465</sup> On this occasion, students from the class of 1882 who had been suspended from the SPC, completing their studies elsewhere, were retroactively recognized as graduates of 1883.<sup>466</sup> It was a kind of posthumous apology for the personal controversies that had moved Van Dyck to leave the college.

##### 5. From *Akhbar 'an Intishar al-Injil fi Amakin Mukhtalifa* to *al-Nashra al-Usubu 'iyya*

Twelve years after Smith's pioneering accomplishment with the publication of *Majmu' Fawa'id*, the first printed Arabic periodical, the mission introduced "a small-sized, illustrated periodical"<sup>467</sup> that over the decades developed into a journal that still exists today. In 1863, Cornelius Van Dyck became the editor of *Akhbar 'an Intishar al-Injil fi Amakin Mukhtalifa* (News about Spreading the Gospel in Different Locations).<sup>468</sup> At first, the journal was more of a monthly newsletter, just four

462 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 109.

463 Ibid. The second statue of this kind was dedicated to Daniel Bliss in 1904. Jessup commented that "these statues prove that the people of the East are not ungrateful for what men of the West have done for them." (*Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 742)

464 Jessup mentioned only that former and current students of the college were present (*Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 109). See also Presbyterian Church in the USA, "Dr. Van Dyck's Semi-centennial" and "Dr. Van Dyck and the Syrians." According to Sarruf and Nimr, the relationship between leaders of the college and Van Dyck remained clouded until his death ("al-Duktur Kurniliyus Fan Dayk," part 2, 1).

465 Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu'assasun li l-Jami'a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 175.

466 From a speech by Y. Sarruf, given at the dedication of busts of Van Dyck and Wortabet in 1913, in: *Al-Kulliyaa* 4, no. 6 (1913), cited in: *ibid.*, 180.

467 Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 77 (table 4).

468 As with Smith's journal, it is not clear whether Van Dyck was the only editor of the mission publication. Areas of responsibility within the mission were never strictly defined. Since in 1863 William Thomson and Van Dyck belonged to the mission's "editing committee," which was responsible for missionary literature, Thomson might also have served as editor. See Syria

pages long. As its title indicates, its initial focus was limited to news that concerned spreading the Gospel throughout the world. Each issue contained three or four articles, resembling short stories or extended anecdotes from the world of mission work. The salvation of a heathen culture from its “primitive” state of ignorance through Christianity – whether in the South Pacific, India, or Madagascar – was a recurring theme. The featured locations were sites where the ABCFM had sent its missionaries. As the anecdotes were presumably taken from missionary reports that had first appeared in the *Missionary Herald*, the Beirut periodical might be thought of as a condensed, Arabic version of the *Missionary Herald*. Smith’s *Majmu’ Fawa’id* was more diverse, featuring not only Christian topics, although its focus was likewise on spreading the message of Christianity. The journal *Akhbar ‘an Intishar*, which first appeared in 1863, was the first Arabic periodical with printed pictures.<sup>469</sup> Its second issue, dated May 1, 1863, featured a drawing of a ceremony at a temple to *Jakkarnūt* (Jagannātha), an Indian deity.<sup>470</sup> Browsing through the periodical, it is evident that these kinds of illustrations held great significance at the time. Since the punches for the illustrations came from the United States,<sup>471</sup> it can be assumed that the ABCFM also used them for its own publications.

After 1866, Van Dyck’s periodical also began to feature informative articles that did not promote a Christian message, although the publication continued to serve as the voice of the Syria Mission. The journal was renamed *al-Nashra al-Shahriyya* (Monthly Bulletin) in June 1868.<sup>472</sup> Its external appearance changed, but its content continued to resemble that of its predecessor.<sup>473</sup> For a while, the old title continued to appear as the journal’s subtitle. After January 1871, *al-Nashra* began to appear once a week and was renamed *al-Nashra al-Ushbu’iyya* (Weekly Bulletin). Instead of the previous subtitle, an open Bible was now depicted featuring the words from Psalm 119:130, “*fataḥ kalāmika yunayir*” (“the unfolding of your words gives light”).<sup>474</sup> (Figure 6)

Mission to Anderson (Beirut, February 6, 1863): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (21). Editorship of the publication changed constantly in the years to come (see below).

469 Glaß, “Von Mir’āt al-Aḥwāl zu Tamarāt al-Funūn,” 41; Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-‘Arabiyya*, 66.

470 In English, the Vishnu deity was called “Juggernaut” (idol), which explains the Arabic name. Kulke, *Jagannātha-Kult und Gajapati-Königtum*, 216–19: To consolidate their political influence in the Odisha region, the British conquered Puri and assumed control of the Jagannath temple at the beginning of the nineteenth century. British missionaries frowned upon cooperation with idol worshippers, and the matter was brought before British Parliament, where “Juggernaut” came to symbolize idolatry.

471 Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-‘Arabiyya*, 66.

472 *Nashra* has the same meaning as *jarīda* (newspaper, journal), but is used less frequently. See Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 70.

473 Khuri, *al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 67.

474 With its multiple name changes, the mission journal is sometimes viewed as three separate journals (see, for example, Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-‘Arabiyya*, 20; Khuri, *al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 66–68; Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East*, 34). It was, however, one periodical that evolved over many decades.

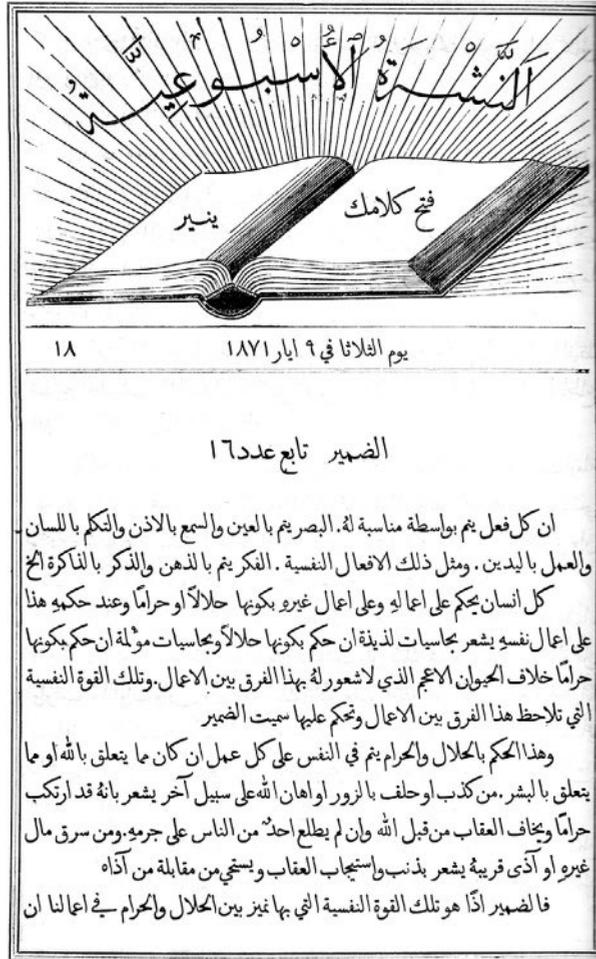


Figure 6: Title page from *al-Nashra al-Usbu'iyya* (May 9, 1871)

The journal increasingly became a hodgepodge of different genres. Although it continued to feature articles about the spread of Christianity, usually in the form of short stories with a moral lesson, a growing number of scholarly and scientific reports joined the mix, along with specific illustrations from the fields of biology, history, philosophy, and poetry. Van Dyck's influence was unmistakable. Beginning with the July 1871 issue, Bible verses, aphorisms,<sup>475</sup> and news of current events appeared under the familiar title *Fawa'id*. All this, as V. F. DI TARRAZI emphasizes, was presented in a simple language that was suitable for a broad reading public, with or without a formal education.<sup>476</sup> The historian YUSUF QASMA KHURI argues

475 The rubric was presumably Van Dyck's idea, since he loved proverbs and aphorisms (see above).

476 Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-'Arabiyya*, 69.

that the scholarly content featured in the *Nashra* helped to promote the projects of young Syrian scholars. Examples include Van Dyck's praise of the new geography book by Salim al-Khuri and Salim Shahada, as well as the founding of the literary and scholarly journal *al-Muqtataf* by Van Dyck's students Ya'qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr.<sup>477</sup>

Once *al-Nashra* appeared weekly, new books were presented in a format that was typical for European and American literary journals. Works of Christian literature, including those published in Arabic translation by the American Mission Press, were serialized and could be read in every weekly edition. Books like Jean-Henri D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation* and Elizabeth Rundle Charles's *Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family* were printed in installments over years.<sup>478</sup> Informative articles on topics such as the Sermon on the Mount and the persecution of the first Christians, or a lexicon of saints' relics, were also serialized.<sup>479</sup> Polemical texts against the Roman Catholic church, especially against Jesuit missionaries in Syria, appeared frequently in the mission's first decades. Under the helm of Cornelius Van Dyck, however, *al-Nashra* took a less confrontational stance, identified by KHURI as "respectful silence" (*al-sukūt al-mauwaqqar*).<sup>480</sup> There was an attempt to foster objective discussion of topics such as papal infallibility, without directly impugning representatives of the Catholic church.<sup>481</sup> When the Jesuit father Van Ham attacked the Americans' translation of the Bible in the Jesuit newspaper *al-Bashir* (The Messenger),<sup>482</sup> *al-Nashra al-Uṣbu'īyya* responded with a series of articles called "Defending against the arrows of the Jesuit Van Ham" (*irtidā' al-sihām 'alā al-yasū'ī Fān Hām*).<sup>483</sup> At the time, the Jesuit periodical *al-Bashir* was particularly known for its religiously motivated discussions and attacks against journals like Bustani's *al-Jinan* and Sarruf's and Nimr's *al-Muqtataf*.<sup>484</sup>

477 Khuri, *al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 68. See also *al-Nashra al-Uṣbu'īyya* 20 (1874): 180; *ibid.*, 21 (1876): 167–68.

478 Khuri, *al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 69–71: D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation* appeared as the journal's lead article in 246 installments, between 1872 and 1877. The installments were eventually compiled into a book that was published by the American press. *History of the Reformation* was published in 1866, followed by *Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family* in 1885. Van Dyck was credited as the translator, although Jessup and others mention that Bustani assisted with the translation of D'Aubigné's history. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 484; Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-'Arabīyya*, 90 (see also appendix I). Publishing stories or entire books in serial form was common practice among European newspapers in the nineteenth century, encouraging readers to subscribe to the newspapers and journals. See Holt, "Narrative and Reading Public in 1870s Beirut," 38.

479 Khuri, *al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 67.

480 *Ibid.*, 68.

481 *Al-Nashra al-Shahriyya* (September 1870): 1–4.

482 Glaß, *Der Muqtataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 79–80: *al-Bashir* was founded by the Jesuits in 1870 and appeared until 1947. The periodical's printed illustrations and pictures demonstrated its high technical standards.

483 Khuri, *al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 68.

484 Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East*, 34: "This kind of heated encounter, endemic to the Lebanese scene, had constructive results in generating a seminal educational and cultural contest of ideas in the nineteenth century."

In contrast to Smith's journal, the first years of *al-Nashra* were characterized by a similarly unstructured format. Page numbers were introduced after the periodical's expansion in November 1867, but its authors remained unnamed. Likewise, no sources were given for the scholarly articles at this time. There was no recognizable logic to the order in which the highly diverse articles appeared, in contrast to Smith's journal. Over the course of the years, the names of missionaries and Syrian Protestants responsible for compiling the news of a particular issue appeared with greater frequency (Henry Harris Jessup on November 3, 1871; Ibrahim Sarkis<sup>485</sup> on January 21, 1873; Yuhanna Abcarius<sup>486</sup> on May 3, 1875). As presumed to be the case with Smith's *Majmu' Fawa'id*, *al-Nashra* was likely edited by a constantly rotating team of missionaries and Syrians who helped to publish the journal. Nassim al-Helou, who worked on the editorial staff beginning in 1891, mentioned that the Syrians Ibrahim Sarkis, Rizq Allah Barbari<sup>487</sup> and As'ad al-Shadudi<sup>488</sup> contributed significantly to *Nashra's* development.<sup>489</sup>

We can only speculate why Van Dyck was removed as editor in 1879.<sup>490</sup> William Eddy, who became the new editor in 1880, wrote in the introduction to the first issue of that year that *al-Nashra al-Usubu'iyya* would remain a religiously oriented journal. According to Eddy, it was not enough to be a scholarly journal like *al-Jinan* or *al-Muqtataf*, or a financial paper like *al-Janna* or *Lisan al-Hal*.<sup>491</sup> Van Dyck's selection of topics for the *Nashra* had presumably become too secular for the Syria Mission, so *al-Hakim* Van Dyck had to step down. Samuel Jessup took over from William Eddy in 1883, and Henry Harris Jessup edited the journal and its supplemental series (*al-Mulhaq al-Nashra al-Usubu'iyya*) from 1889 until 1902.<sup>492</sup> In the twentieth century, *al-Nashra* became a "semi-monthly review" and a "collection of articles on the many different phases of family life."<sup>493</sup> Under the direction of Rev. Adib Awwad, *al-Nashra* today is published by the Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon.

485 See appendix II, no. 53.

486 See appendix II, no. 1.

487 See appendix II, no. 17.

488 See appendix II, no. 55.

489 Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-'Arabiyya*, 20; al-Helou, *Muzakirrat al-Mu'allim Nassim al-Helou*, 146–47. More on these individuals in appendix II.

490 According to Glaß (*Der Muqtataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 78), Van Dyck was replaced by Ibrahim al-Haurani, a Greek Catholic teacher from Aleppo. Haurani had previously worked as a translator and proofreader at the American Mission Press, and he taught Arabic rhetoric, mathematics, and logic at the SPC. He did assist with the magazine's development between 1880 and 1915, but he was not the editor. In 1880, William Eddy assumed the editorship. See al-Helou, *Muzakirrat al-Mu'allim Nassim al-Helou*, 147.

491 *Al-Nashra al-Usubu'iyya* 1 (January 1, 1880), 1.

492 Jessup reported that he had to take over as editor because his brother Samuel and William Eddy were in the United States. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 572. *Al-Mulhaq* lasted only until 1902. NEST possesses original documents of nearly all of the monthly issues in the supplemental series.

493 AA.7.1/American Mission Press Beirut, Box 1 (Report from George A. Ashkar).

## 6. “The joys of science”: Van Dyck and the scientific societies

Given Van Dyck’s passion for everything having to do with knowledge and its acquisition, he was readily welcomed as a member of the American Oriental Society<sup>494</sup> and the DMG.<sup>495</sup> The new scientific societies that emerged in Beirut in the 1850s were especially enthusiastic about his participation. Most lasted for only a few years, before being replaced by a better organized or more inclusive successor.<sup>496</sup>

As a founding member of the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences, Van Dyck proved early on that he could deliver a scholarly presentation in Arabic. His talk entitled “*Fi Ladhat al-‘Ilm wa ‘Awa’dihi*” (On the Delights and Utilities of Science)<sup>497</sup> revealed what drove and inspired him – that all persons should expand their horizons through science. Van Dyck encouraged his listeners to engage with science in their free time, and to motivate others to do so as well.<sup>498</sup> He distinguished between two kinds of people. The first kind saw no reason to expand or replace their existing knowledge with new information; they relied upon the experiences of the past and questioned anyone who sought to change the status quo. The other kind celebrated the acquisition of knowledge, because it eased their lives and daily work – an idea was later promoted by the editors of the *Muqtataf*.<sup>499</sup> Van Dyck not only taught about knowledge in daily life. When he spoke of knowledge from the past and present, he was almost certainly talking about himself – an attitude that he carried throughout his entire career:

When he [the friend of science] observes things that happen in his lifetime, he is pleased, and he compares them with the events of past generations, thereby recognizing the similarities and differences between epochs. He directs his steps according to the choices of those who came

494 Around 1847, Van Dyck became a corresponding member of the American Oriental Society in Boston. He wrote to Anderson: “If I know my own feelings I have only one motive in preparing anything for the Oriental Society and that is to contribute what little may be in my power towards causing in literary men an interest in Missionaries and Missions.” See Van Dyck to Anderson (‘Abeih, October 8 and November 12, 1847): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (314 and 316).

495 According to information from the archive of the German Oriental Society (administered by the library of the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg), in 1858 Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer asked the DMG’s executive board to accept Van Dyck as a corresponding member, as Eli Smith’s successor. However, no handwritten declaration of membership from Van Dyck exists. According to Sa’di (“Al-Hakîm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 29), Van Dyck had belonged to the DMG since his trip to Germany in 1860. Until his death, he was included on the society’s membership list. In contrast to Smith, no reports or excerpts of letters by Van Dyck can be found in the ZDMG or in the society’s papers.

496 More on this in chapter I, section 2.4.

497 Khuri, *A‘mal al-Jam‘iyya al-Suriyya li l-‘Ulum wa l-Funun*, 27–32.

498 Van Dyck, “*Fi Ladhat al-‘Ilm wa ‘Awa’dihi*,” in: *ibid.*, 31: “Rather, it is my intention that you should use your free time – which everyone certainly has – to train your intellect, expanding and multiplying knowledge.”

499 Ya‘qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr were among the first sixteen students at the SPC, and they later taught there as well. They edited the *Muqtataf*, the “*Jarida ‘Ilmiyya wa Sina‘iyya*” (Journal of Science and Industry), with the emblem of a pen and a hammer. In 1888, its subtitle was changed to “Journal of Science, Industry, and Agriculture.”

before him, either viewing their life's work as a model to emulate, or as a lesson to be kept in mind.<sup>500</sup>

As frequently mentioned in this study, the topic of knowledge was a constant focus of the scholarly circles of this time. Van Dyck's second talk for the Syrian Society, "*Fi Fadl al-Muta'akhirrin 'ala l-Mutaqaddimin*" (On the Superiority of the Moderns over the Ancients),<sup>501</sup> explained how contemporary generations must build upon or revise the understanding of their ancestors, if it was not correct. In all situations, however, a connection to the past should be maintained.

In 1882, the *al-Majma' al-'Ilmi al-Sharqi* (Oriental Scientific Association) was founded in Beirut. Its members included well-known personalities such as Ya'qub Sarruf, Faris Nimr, Salim al-Bustani, Ibrahim al-Yaziji, William Van Dyck, and Jurji Zaydan. Van Dyck and Wortabet were elected to its executive board. Like its predecessor societies, this association was dedicated to science and its practical applications.<sup>502</sup> With the departure of the *Muqtataf* into Egyptian exile in 1884,<sup>503</sup> support for the Oriental Scientific Association seems to have faltered. The society dissolved itself around 1885.<sup>504</sup> At its annual meeting two years earlier, Van Dyck had emphasized that the success of such an association depended upon its lasting effects.<sup>505</sup>

## 7. Final observations

The life's work of Cornelius Van Dyck clearly did have a lasting effect. The young doctor from Kinderhook became an exceptional figure in the American mission in Syria. As a member of the second generation of missionaries, he was able to build upon foundations that missionaries before him had established. But as he developed, he moved in a direction that the ABCFM had not approved: "He was a foreigner who went native."<sup>506</sup> Van Dyck's talents lay more in service to education and scholarship than in missionizing, as the ABCFM and later the PBCFM were aware.<sup>507</sup> Decades of work for the Syria Mission transformed the impulsive temperament of the young mission doctor. At first, he wanted nothing more than to master the Arabic language, in order to convert the people who received his medical care. But as his enthusiasm for traditional mission work waned, he rediscovered his

500 Van Dyck, "Fi Ladhat al-'Ilm wa 'Awa'dihi," in: Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 28.

501 Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 79–82.

502 Philipp mentions that this was the successor organization to the *Jam'iyat al 'Ilmiyya al-Suriyya*, which was founded in 1868 but only lasted one year (*Jurji Zaydan*, 25). See also chapter I, section 2.4.

503 Glaß, "Der Missionar Cornelius van Dyck," 191.

504 Zaydan, *Tarikh Adab al-Lughah al-'Arabiyya, al-Juz'a al-Rabi'*, 73.

505 Van Dyck, "al-Khutba al-Sanawiyya," 241–47 (here: 242).

506 Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 76.

507 Dennis, "C. V. A. Van Dyck," 36: "He chose to dedicate his abilities to the intellectual advancement of the people, to humanitarian ministry, and to the production of instructive and helpful literature, rather than to the department of evangelistic effort."

scholarly and scientific roots. He recognized that could make a contribution to the cultural awakening of Syria, his second home. Liberal thought and secular education became an important component of his missionary work.<sup>508</sup>

USSAMA MAKDISI argues that Van Dyck's influence was overshadowed by the "militant enthusiasm of new Protestant missionaries."<sup>509</sup> This assessment may be true of the early decades, when Van Dyck was closely associated with the mission. However, the Arab world's image of a successful Cornelius Van Dyck had less and less to do with the American mission. Van Dyck attained a position of great respect in Syrian society. He was considered a patron of the *nahḍa*, and all<sup>510</sup> who worked with him honored him deeply for his talents and his engagement on behalf of the Syrian people. In the end, not much remained of the "missionary" Van Dyck. To borrow Makdisi's metaphor, it could be said that Van Dyck's influence as a scholar completely overshadowed his abilities and convictions as a missionary. Van Dyck remained a pious man and passionate preacher until the end of his life. Anderson could not imagine a better man for the pulpit than the mission doctor with perfect Arabic.<sup>511</sup> Nevertheless, he did not fit the description of a typical missionary. He did not come from the milieu of a New England theological seminary,<sup>512</sup> but instead he had devoted his youth to science and rational thought. He did not allow his personal religious convictions to interfere with his work as a scientist.<sup>513</sup> This did not mean, however, that he would give up his Christian principles if they ever conflicted with science.<sup>514</sup> Overall, as he affirmed in his last sermon at the SPC, he was convinced that correct science and true faith were gifts from God, and "two things that are true cannot contradict one another" (*fa-lā yumkin an yatanāqīḍā mā zālan ṣādiqīn*).<sup>515</sup> The tightrope walk between personal spirituality and rational liberal thought was the secret for Van Dyck's success in Syria. Despite his work as a doctor and teacher, and the many people who frequently sought his advice,<sup>516</sup> Van Dyck preferred the

508 Sa'di, "Al-Hakim Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck," 25.

509 Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 80.

510 Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 199. According to Ibrahim Matar ("al-Duktur Kurniliyus Fan Dayk," 13), there is no study of the *nahḍa* that does not mention Van Dyck.

511 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, June 27, 1850): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 13 (HHL): "I have felt that Dr. Van Dyck ought to make Arabic preaching his great business; and he is ready I doubt not to reside where he can preach at the best advantage." Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, February 23, 1859): *ibid.*, vol. 25 (HHL): "I hope the good brother [Van Dyck] will continue to exercise the gift of preaching that is in him."

On March 1, 1874, Daniel Bliss wrote to his wife Abby: "We had a very interesting sermon this morning from Dr. Van Dyck. He was truly eloquent. He stood out in the broad platform, with his small Testament in hand, and poured forth the truth with an animation accompanied with gestures unusual for him. ... Some of the Maronite young men told Faris Sahyun that such preaching would make all Protestants." See Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 209.

512 Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 46: As a young man, Van Dyck was not immersed in "evangelical orthodoxy."

513 This was the assessment of his student Jurji Zaydan. See Philipp, *Ġurġī Zaidān*, 34.

514 *Ibid.*, 179.

515 Cited in: Khuri, *al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 73.

516 Dennis, "C. V. A. Van Dyck," 36: "Many were accustomed to visit him for counsel and cheer in their perplexities and troubles."

retreat of his own study.<sup>517</sup> He instructed his students that “intolerance cannot be tolerated.”<sup>518</sup> Engaging with science to learn more about the world, to whatever extent, was part of human nature. Van Dyck was not a scientist renowned for new discoveries. Most of his books were compilations of different sources; their distinction was being written in a comprehensible Arabic. At the time, one needed an unusually wide vocabulary and numerous reference works in order to understand the classical Arabic works of centuries past. Van Dyck’s books, by contrast, were intended for the average reading public.<sup>519</sup> He is rightly known not just for “popularizing” knowledge, but for “humanizing” it.<sup>520</sup> Yusuf al-Asir, who assisted Van Dyck with the translation of the Bible, told his daughter several years after his death: “Your father taught me, by his published writings, that it is possible to write good Arabic, correct in grammar and in idiom, in a style so simple and so clear as to be easily understood by an intelligent reader, whether learned or unlearned.”<sup>521</sup>

His textbooks were pathbreaking and widely used not only in Syria, but in Egypt as well. Familiarity with his writings extended beyond Christian circles. Van Dyck’s works were well regarded at Cairo’s Al-Azhar University, and also by Muslim reformers such as Muhammad Rashid Rida and Muhammad ‘Abduh.<sup>522</sup>

Van Dyck adopted traditional Syrian dress early on,<sup>523</sup> and he spent more than two-thirds of his life in Syria. The same was true for many of his mission colleagues, but Syrians did not say that his colleagues seemed like one of them.<sup>524</sup> The ABCFM’s limited resources rarely allowed its missionaries to leave the field in order to travel home. Van Dyck asked Rufus Anderson many times for permission to travel back to the United States. Not only did he seek to recuperate physically from overwork; he also feared losing his connection to America. In 1852, he wrote to Boston:

I consider such a visit desirable in order that I may become re-Americanized. I find that I have already lost a large part of my American notions, feelings and sympathies. I have become very much Syrianized, and cannot say that I feel it be much of an acquisition. I no longer feel that interest in American affairs, or even in the affairs of the Board which I once felt and which every missionary ought to feel.<sup>525</sup>

Jessup reported that shortly before his death, Van Dyck said: “I have made a great mistake. I should have improved my regular vacations. I have lost touch with the American Church and American life.”<sup>526</sup> Given their living and working condi-

517 Al-Barudi, “Faqid Suriyan,” 215.

518 Sa’ di, “Al-Hakīm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 37.

519 Ibid., 35.

520 Ibid., 36.

521 Ibid.

522 Sarruf and Nimr, “al-Marhum al-Mu‘allim Butrus al-Bustani,” 1; Sa’ di, “Al-Hakīm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 36; Glaß, “Der Missionar Cornelius van Dyck,” 189.

523 Sa’ di, “Al-Hakīm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 26.

524 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 107.

525 Van Dyck to Anderson (Sidon, September 30, 1852): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (327).

526 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 366; William Thomson and William Bird expressed similar views.

tions, some missionaries did begin to identify with their new culture to a greater or lesser degree.

A particular event attests to Van Dyck's celebrity among the Syrian population, as well as among many religious groups and Ottoman politicians. As already mentioned, the year 1890 marked his fiftieth anniversary in Syria. Hardly an Arabic newspaper in Beirut did not report on the milestone. Although Van Dyck usually did not care for such festivities, he was overwhelmed by the response.<sup>527</sup> He received official visits for days. The missionaries presented him with a bound collection of his Arabic works.<sup>528</sup> The Kaiserswerth deaconesses, with whom he had a good relationship,<sup>529</sup> came to pay their respects along with several students, as did members of the native Protestant church and a committee of the "Sons of Syria and Egypt." On behalf of the latter organization, John Wortabet prepared a speech for Van Dyck, keeping the honoree's love for simple but aesthetically pleasing language in mind, so "that it should contain none of the extravagant Eastern expressions which are so painful and often shocking to our severer, simpler tastes."<sup>530</sup> Van Dyck received a letter of congratulations from the Greek Orthodox patriarch of Antioch, and an imperial medal from Sultan 'Abul Hamid II in recognition of his humanitarian, scientific, and literary accomplishments.<sup>531</sup>

Five years later, the newspapers were once again full of articles about the famous American. This time, however, they were death announcements.<sup>532</sup> On November 13, 1895, Van Dyck passed away at the age of seventy-seven.<sup>533</sup> In the *Muqtataf*, Ya'qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr wrote that Van Dyck was among the most important persons who came to Syria from abroad. Alongside many others, he had encouraged Syria's scientific and literary awakening.<sup>534</sup>

It was not easy for the Syrians to accommodate Van Dyck's specific request that no eulogies be delivered at his funeral, with the poetic and often very moving language that was typical in the Arab world. Many did compose written eulogies, which were eventually published in a special volume by Iskandar al-Barudi, Van

527 Sarruf and Nimr, "al-Duktur Fan Dayk," 320–23; and "al-Duktur Kurniliyus Fan Dayk," part 1, 888: Additional greetings came from Prince 'Abd al-Qadir al-Huseyni al-Jasa'iri and the mufti from Damascus, Mahmud Hamza. Even the Egyptian reformer Muhammad 'Abduh helped with the preparations. See Glaß, "Der Missionar Cornelius van Dyck," 189.

528 Dennis, "C. V. A. Van Dyck," 35.

529 According to Julia Hauser, who wrote her dissertation on the Kaiserswerth deaconesses in Beirut, Van Dyck and Daniel Bliss were among the members of the deaconesses' "inner circle." Jasmin Sharruf, who was being trained by the deaconesses, worked as a helper in the Van Dyck household. See *German Religious Women in Late Ottoman Beirut*, 139 and 168.

530 Presbyterian Church in the USA, "Dr. Van Dyck and the Syrians," 484–85.

531 Presbyterian Church in the USA, "Dr. Van Dyck's Semicentennial," 289; and "Dr. Van Dyck and the Syrians," 485; 'Ajuluni, "Qissat al-Duktur Kurniliyus Fan Dayk," 21; Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 76–77.

532 *Ibid.*, 76.

533 Today one can still visit Van Dyck's grave at the Anglo-American Cemetery in Beirut. The gravestone was erected by John Wortabet and several of Van Dyck's other companions. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, 111.

534 Sarruf and Nimr, "al-Duktur Kurniliyus Fan Dayk," part 1, 882.

Dyck's colleague at the SPC.<sup>535</sup> About a week after Van Dyck's funeral, Henry Harris Jessup coordinated memorial services in different congregations throughout Syria; "in all these places men of all sects, Oriental Christians, Moslems and Druses were among the hearers."<sup>536</sup>

<sup>535</sup> Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 110.

<sup>536</sup> Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 613–14.

## CHAPTER III

### THE COMMUNITY OF SYRIAN PROTESTANTS IN THE CONTACT ZONE<sup>1</sup>

The missionaries ... are always referred to as the sole founders of this or that school or university, as though they had done this entirely independently and alone. Not enough credit for the creation of modernity has ever been given to those who pressed them to open schools, send their children, gave them the land,<sup>2</sup> built the buildings, taught in the schools, and in general participated in the enterprise.<sup>3</sup>

For this reason, mission studies have recently devoted more attention to the biographies of native converts. Those who adopted the missionaries' faith and supported their work have often been overshadowed by the accomplishments of Western missions.<sup>4</sup> The exotic "other" was often the subject of unusual or entertaining stories,<sup>5</sup> but religious and non-religious travel literature of the nineteenth century rarely depicted members of native populations as well-rounded individuals.<sup>6</sup> The Syria Mission is a typical example, as the lives of its native missionaries, teachers, translators, and helpers are often difficult to reconstruct. Historical sources rarely contain more than general statistics<sup>7</sup> or uplifting descriptions of conversion experiences.<sup>8</sup> The

- 1 For more on the "contact zone," see the first section of the introduction, as well as Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone."
- 2 See also Lindner, "The Flexibility of Home," 38: "The History of both the Mission House and the Old Susa House demonstrates that the ABCFM missionaries were inherently dependent upon Syrians to acquire dwellings for them, even if the original details of these alliances are lost."
- 3 Jean Said Makdisi, *Teta, Mother and Me: Three Generations of Arab Women* (London, 2007), 152. In the twentieth century, the mission tempered this one-sided portrayal, according Syrian Protestants greater recognition. See McGilvary, *Story of Our Syria Mission*; PBCFM, *Centennial of the American Press*. See also the quote below from the anniversary volume of the American Mission Press (note 16).
- 4 See Christine Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," and "The Flexibility of Home"; Fruma Zachs, "Building a Cultural Identity"; Andrew Witmer, "Agency, Race, and Christianity."
- 5 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 67. The other is "at once an object of desire and derision."
- 6 For example: Ida Pfeiffer, *Reise einer Wienerin in das Heilige Land* (Vienna, 1846); Colonel Churchill, *Mount Lebanon: A Ten Years' Residence from 1842 to 1852: Describing the Manners, Customs, and Religion of its Inhabitants*, 3 vols. (London, 1853). The historian Xue Li has made similar observations in her dissertation "Making Local China: The Case of the Protestant Church in Yangzhou": An 1884 article, published by English missionaries in Yangzhou, referred only to "native preachers," "four men," and "a mandarin's son" who sought to contact the missionaries. See also Taylor, *China's Millions*, 67.
- 7 The Syria Mission's annual reports recorded only the number, not the names, of native helpers.
- 8 The same was true of the biographies of "national helpers" that were written by German missionaries in Tranquebar. See Liebau, *Die indischen Mitarbeiter der Tranquebarmission*, 96. Because of Protestants' interest in the relationship between faith and individuality, Protestant

*Missionary Herald* did report thoroughly on the story of As'ad al-Shidyaq, an early convert. He was imprisoned by the Maronite patriarch and died in captivity in 1830, becoming the mission's first martyr.<sup>9</sup> Here, too, his religious reorientation overshadowed his broader identity.<sup>10</sup> Other significant depictions include Henry Harris Jessup's *Women of the Arabs* (1874), with three chapters on the Syrian Protestants Luciya Shikkur, Rahil 'Ata and Miryam Nahass, as well as his book *Kamil Abdul Messiah El Aietany* (1898). In these biographies, Jessup sought to present the social and familial problems that converts faced in an exciting and entertaining way.

American missionaries assumed the leading role in official representations of the mission. Their native colleagues were usually identified as "native helpers" – or less often, as "native assistants" – although many were graduates of mission schools, or had attended other well-known Christian colleges in Syria. Butrus al-Bustani, Tannus al-Haddad, and Elyas Fawaz worked for the mission for decades, yet many reports in the *Missionary Herald* referred to them simply as "native brothers," or used only their initials, which meant they remained anonymous to American readers.<sup>11</sup> As defined over decades, the delegation of responsibilities within the mission suggested a permanent mentor-student relationship. This justified the necessity of the missionaries' presence,<sup>12</sup> as well as their control over the development of Protestant Christianity in Syria. The biographies of Bustani and Wortabet illustrate how difficult it was for native colleagues to break free of their assigned roles and be accepted as the missionaries' equals.

Minutes from annual conferences and the missionaries' regular meetings clearly demonstrate that native colleagues did not participate. If a native colleague wanted to bring a matter before the mission, a written request was presented by one of missionaries, and it was discussed in the requester's absence. A further point of contention for Bustani and Wortabet was their employment by the mission, not the

mission periodicals featured many more stories about converts than Catholic journals. See Wu, "Narratives of Conversion," 79–80.

9 MH 23 (1827), in: ROS 1, 437–49, 456–68. See also Isaac Bird, *The Martyr of Lebanon* (1864); Butrus al-Bustani, *Qissat As'ad al-Shidyaq* (The History of As'ad al-Shidyaq).

10 Makdisi (*Artillery of Heaven*, 103–37) provides a critical depiction of As'ad's motivations and the mission's interpretation of these events.

11 MH 34 (1839), in: ROS 3, 158; MH 41 (1845), in: *ibid.*, 401, 416: "They were instructed by B. B. In the afternoon T. H. assisted me. ..." On November 9, 1846, Van Dyck wrote to Rufus Anderson about "the instruction being given during one half of the day by Butrus el-Bistany in Arabic Grammar." See ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (315). The summary in the *Missionary Herald* (vol. 43, 1847) stated that instruction was "being given one half of the day by our native brother." Cited in: ROS 4, 3.

The same was true of reports written by Danish and German missionaries in the Tranquebar Mission, particularly from the nineteenth century on (Liebau, *Die indischen Mitarbeiter der Tranquebarmission*, 95), as well as for the ABCFM mission in Ottoman Bulgaria (Reeves-Elington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 128–30).

12 Hauser, "Waisen gewinnen," 28: Reports by Theodor Fliedner and the Kaiserswerth deaconesses knowingly perpetuated stereotypes and descriptions of the Syrians that appeared to confirm the missionaries' superiority, thereby justifying the mission project.

ABCFM,<sup>13</sup> which meant that they were not considered equal participants within the Syria Mission. Instead of being paid by the ABCFM, their income depended in part upon donations that came from American Bible societies.<sup>14</sup> The amount of their compensation was another problem. While the Americans received an annual income of between \$800 and \$1,000, native helpers (depending upon their assignment) received only \$100 to \$300.<sup>15</sup>

The actual people whom the mission sought to address often assumed a subordinate role in the missionaries' correspondence. The missionaries' personal experiences, and problems associated with the mission's operations, received the most attention. Syrian helpers – almost always men – were mentioned only in passing. None of the historical documents include a list of native converts, colleagues, or helpers – not even for a particular period of time. The list in appendix II is intended to help identify Syrians who worked with the mission.

Only in the early years of the twentieth century did Syrian Protestants who worked for the mission (and in some cases, served as leaders) begin to receive more official recognition. On the one hundredth anniversary of the American Mission Press in 1922, the American missionary George Ford wrote:

It need not be said, to be surely and fully known, that it has not been the American missionaries who have done the bulk of this work. They would have been powerless and helpless but for the capable and reliable men of the country who have done most of the work and done it well.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the traditional work of the mission, the growth of an indigenous Protestant community was supported by two phenomena that should not be neglected. First, there were a growing number of marriages within the emerging Protestant circle. Second, it was common for mission families to take in Syrian girls who were orphaned or destitute.<sup>17</sup>

13 Anderson to the Syria Mission (On board the Turkish steamer, April 23, 1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.

14 "General Meeting of the Syria Mission" (Beirut, April 24, 1842): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1. In 1848, Bustani asked to be employed directly by the ABCFM, but his request was denied. See Badr, "Mission to 'Nominal Christians,'" 296.

15 Tibawi (*American Interests in Syria*, 210) estimates that missionary incomes were between \$1,000 and \$1,200. According to ABCFM sources, this estimate is too high. Missionaries initially received between \$600 and \$800, with a small increase in later decades. See the report to the Prudential Committee (Beirut, April 24, 1842): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (29).

One reason for the inequality in incomes was that the missionaries' cost of living was deemed to be higher than that of the natives, who were accustomed to local conditions. In addition, missionary families received shipments of various items from the United States. See Liebau, *Die indischen Mitarbeiter der Tranquebarmission*, 132.

16 PBCFM, *Centennial of the American Press*, 14. In this anniversary volume, numerous Syrian authors, translators, and helpers at the press were recognized by name.

17 Van Dyck, "Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission," 6: "some of the children were taken into Mission families and put into the Mission Seminary"; Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 236: "Another orphan was the Druze 'Sitt Aba.' This young woman rejected the care provided by her biological family and 'took refuge' in the house of the Van Dyck family, thus becoming an adopted boarding student in the Van Dyck family."

Intermarriage within the Syrian Protestant community was supported by the growing sense of community that developed through a common religion and affiliation with the mission,<sup>18</sup> although it also meant breaking with previously held traditions.<sup>19</sup> Butrus al-Bustani, once a Maronite, married Rahil 'Ata. She grew up with the family of Eli Smith, and she rejected the wishes of her own family that she marry within the Greek Orthodox tradition.<sup>20</sup> After the death of her first husband Jacob Gregory, John Wortabet's mother Susan married the Protestant deacon Elyas Fawaz. Salome Carabet, daughter of the convert John Carabet, grew up within the Protestant community and eventually married John Wortabet, whose connection to the mission began when he was a child.<sup>21</sup>

The willingness of the missionary families Smith, Whiting, Van Dyck, Calhoun, and De Forest to take in Syrian girls reflected a practice that was common among missions, as MARILYN BOOTH describes: "Because missionaries viewed the family as key to conversion, and women as key to the family, it was thought that the most efficient means of instilling the missionaries' brand of belief in the field was to train young girls in missionary homes."<sup>22</sup> As with the five girls (Salome and Melita Carabet, Hanni Wortabet, Rufka and Sada Gregory) taken in by the Whitings,<sup>23</sup> Syrian foster children were useful helpers in schools and congregations, eventually working as teachers themselves or marrying Syrian Protestant husbands.<sup>24</sup> Missionaries' wives were thought to be better models of wives and mothers than the girls' own mothers, from whom they had been separated.<sup>25</sup> The missionaries' wives, in particular, often grew quite fond of the new family members, whom they viewed as adoptive children.<sup>26</sup> However, the missionary families and biological parents did not always agree upon the terms of this "adoption." This could be seen in the interactions between Matilda Whiting and Susan Wortabet (John Wortabet's mother), who did not want to place her daughter Hanni in the Whitings' care, as LINDNER describes in her study:

18 Liebau, *Die indischen Mitarbeiter der Tranquebarmission*, 192–93.

19 Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 132: An exception was the marriage between Hanni Wortabet, John Wortabet's sister, and the German missionary Heinrich Reichardt.

20 MH 39 (1843), in: ROS 3, 381–82; Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 93–94. See also Lindner, "Rahil 'Ata al-Bustani."

21 More in chapter III, section 2, and appendix II.

22 Booth, "'She Herself was the Ultimate Rule,'" 434.

23 Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs*, 54, 64; Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 236–37, 273.

24 Missionaries' wives who helped to raise native girls were among the educated elite of their time, since they had attended secondary schools or colleges in the United States. The same was true for generations of Syrian Protestant women, who received their education at mission schools and with missionary families. More in Lindner, "The Flexibility of Home."

25 Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers*, 33: "They also feared that the girls would revert to their traditional religious customs if they returned home to live."

26 Lindner, "Rahil 'Ata al-Bustani," 52: Sarah Lanman Smith, who took in Rahil 'Ata (later, Bustani's wife) as a young girl, saw Rahil as an adopted child. See Hooker, *Memoir of Mrs. Sarah Lanman Smith*, 377. "It is most likely that Rahil's parents viewed this arrangement as an apprenticeship, rather than adoption, as the former were common in early nineteenth century Ottoman Syria." To Sarah Smith, Rahil was "between a daughter and a servant." (Hooker, *Memoir of Mrs. Sarah Lanman Smith*, 371)

Her unequal status was emphasised during Susan's conflict with Matilda Whiting. The missionaries assumed that Susan would automatically and unreservedly place her daughter Hannie under Matilda's care and were shocked when Susan refused to do so. Despite Susan's contestation however, Hannie was relocated to Jerusalem and resided with Matilda Whiting.<sup>27</sup>

Among the missionary families, as well as in the mission schools, the children grew up within the context of a Western Protestant value system. A new generation of Syrian children grew up moving between two different cultures. The missionaries did not find that all of the Syrian Protestants who attended American schools were suited for the mission's Protestant community, but these students nonetheless contributed to cultural and educational change within Syria. LINDNER calls this group the "Protestant Levantine community."<sup>28</sup> In the eyes of the mission, these Protestants lacked piety and spirituality, trading on the Americans' reputation to gain wealth and prestige.<sup>29</sup> John Wortabet's brother Gregory, who also attended the Beirut seminary for boys, was never regarded by the missionaries as a suitable candidate for preacher. They were even more upset by his ambitious but secular career path that brought him to England and the United States.<sup>30</sup> Establishing an independent identity outside the "cradle of the mission" became a recurring source of conflict for self-assured Syrian Protestants. The missionaries promoted freedom of thought and emancipation from false Christian traditions – within the boundaries set by the American mission. Divergent theological views or life plans that disregarded the mission were deemed unacceptable, leading inevitably to exclusion from the mission, if not from the indigenous Protestant community. The missionaries complicated Syrian Protestant intellectuals' reflections on their own religious and intellectual culture. On one hand, the missionaries demanded that Syrian Protestants break completely with their former religious traditions. These traditions were viewed as depraved, despite their close association with cultural identity. On the other hand, the missionaries discouraged Syrian Protestants from adopting the habitus of Western culture, in order to avoid "denationalization" and the loss of indigenous cultural identity.<sup>31</sup> ANNE FOLKE HENNINGSEN writes that those

27 Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 181–82, 185.

28 From the 1850s on, several Syrians who had once been involved with the mission became well known through independent publications in Europe and America. See Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 22: "these publications were either academic studies or 'travellers accounts' and followed the narrative styles that were popular in contemporary Europe and America." These included: Gregory Wortabet, *Syria and the Syrians* (1856); John Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria* (1860); Habeeb Risk Allah Effendi, *The Thistle and the Cedar of Lebanon* (1854); Assaad Y. Kayat, *A Voice from Lebanon, With The Life and Travels of Assaad Y. Kayat* (1847).

29 Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 159. On the mission seminary students' recruitment by foreign businessmen and military officers, see: W. M. Thomson, "The Committee in the results of the Seminary submit[s] the following report" (April 6, 1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (23).

30 When Gregory Wortabet sought benefactors in England in 1855, Smith attempted to intervene, explaining that someone who had led a group of Syrian dancers, and was now seeking his fortune in England and America, could not be trusted. See Smith to Young (Beirut, July 21, 1855): ABC 60 (105), (HHL). Gregory Wortabet did, however, become a successful author and lecturer in England and the United States. More in appendix II, no. 66.

31 Samir Khalaf (*Cultural Resistance*, 150) also addresses this point, arguing that the missionaries called upon natives to cast aside their own culture. However, it was the religious practice of the

who were influenced by the missionaries repeatedly found themselves in a “double bind situation.”<sup>32</sup> Drawing upon the example of Moravian missionaries in South Africa, she notes that their converts were “never quite ‘white’ enough and never quite ‘native’ enough to be properly categorised and dealt with accordingly.”<sup>33</sup> This was certainly true of Syrian converts as well. Parallels with John Wortabet can be found in HENNINGSEN’S observations about the South African pastor William S. Mazwi. Mazwi saw himself as equal to the European missionaries (“Sir, remember you are a minister and I am also a minister”), adopting what HENNINGSEN calls a “strategy of sameness.”<sup>34</sup> John Wortabet’s conflict with the American mission was likewise characterized by his call for equal treatment. Parallels are also apparent in the missionaries’ views and behavior towards Eastern Christians.<sup>35</sup> Like many other converts,<sup>36</sup> John (whose real name was Yuhanna) accepted the Anglicization of his name and used it for signing English documents. Anglicized names were not merely expeditious; they also became a part of many Syrian Protestants’ identities. It was not unusual for Syrian Protestants to give their children the names of missionaries, or the names of missionaries’ wives and children, as a sign of their regard for the American mission.<sup>37</sup>

Did the Syrians whose lives were shaped by their education at American schools become “hybrid objects” with both “native knowledges” and “the knowledges of cultural authority,” as defined by HOMI BHABHA?<sup>38</sup> If they appeared Western but did not renounce their origins, which culture did they feel was their own? The mission-

Eastern churches that offended the missionaries, not the culture itself, as evident with Smith and Van Dyck.

The missionaries’ behavior towards the converts reflects Bhabha’s description of the colonial subject as a “mimic man” who resembles the colonizers but is not accepted as their equal. (*The Location of Culture*, 87) (2000), 129.

32 Henningsen, “On Difference, Sameness and Double Binds,” 152.

33 Ibid., 153.

34 Ibid., 139–40. Another example of this is the nineteenth-century mission sponsored by the London Missionary Society in southern Botswana. Native preachers were expected to “speak the truth,” but without criticizing or disagreeing with their mentors, so they recited the missionaries’ sermons word for word and even mimicked their gestures. See Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 82.

35 Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 14: “It is certain that, among all the clergy of the Greek Church in Syria, there is not more than one or two that can be called learned men.” Mazwi described the warlike nature of the South African people and referred to them as “natives.” See Henningsen, “On Difference, Sameness and Double Binds,” 143.

36 For example, Jurj became George or Gregory, and Sardas became Susan. Names were not always Anglicized, although the children of Syrian Protestants often received English names. See the names in appendix II.

37 On the occasion of Cornelius Van Dyck’s fiftieth anniversary in Syria, Willam Eddy wrote about Van Dyck’s wife Julia that “not without reason is ‘sit Julia’ a name honored and loved in Syria, and proudly worn by many Syrian girls.” See Presbyterian Church in the USA, “Dr. Van Dyck’s Semicentennial,” 289. John Wortabet named two of his sons William Thomson (after the missionary William M. Thomson) and Erwin Whiting (after the missionary George B. Whiting). Butrus al-Bustani gave one of his daughters the name of Eli Smith’s first wife, Sarah Huntington.

38 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 115.

aries did not want converts to become Westernized, nor did they encourage freedom of thought that was independent of their own ideology. Nevertheless, the Americans unknowingly promoted the merging of cultures, as is evident with Bustani and Wortabet. The integration of different intellectual and cultural influences was a widespread phenomenon of the nineteenth-century world, which was characterized by upheaval and the continuation of the Enlightenment.<sup>39</sup> The new cultural contacts were irreversible, and since influence flowed in both directions (as with Smith and Van Dyck), they should not be dismissed as hegemonial or cultural imperialist. Syrian Protestants, both male and female, chose to adopt Western Protestant forms of thought and behavior. In many cases, Syrian girls decided for themselves to stay with mission families. Syrian boys and men profited from the education and lessons in industriousness that they received at mission schools.<sup>40</sup> In a formal sense, Syrian converts were alienated from their upbringing, since their excommunication or departure from their home church created a division within their own family. On the other hand, they found refuge and security within a new faith community, without having to distance themselves entirely from their upbringing or heritage.<sup>41</sup> In acquiring new values, they developed a kind of hybrid cultural identity. The following sections will depict the insights gained by Bustani and Wortabet throughout this process.

### III.1. "A MAN AHEAD OF HIS TIME"<sup>42?</sup> MU'ALLIM<sup>43</sup> BUTRUS AL-BUSTANI (1819–1883)

#### 1. Biographical overview

Butrus al-Bustani was born in Dbayye, northeast of Sidon, in November 1819. Members of his family<sup>44</sup> had served within the Maronite church for generations, and Bustani himself attended the 'Ayn Warqa seminary in Ghasta. He learned Arabic, Syriac, Italian, and Latin at the seminary, and he later taught there as well. He left the school in 1840 in order to go to Beirut, where he came into contact with the American mission and converted soon thereafter. In 1841, the missionaries hired

39 Conrad, "Enlightenment in Global History," 1014.

40 Lindner, "Rahil 'Ata al-Bustani," 52–53: Through Sarah Smith, "Rahil was ... encouraged to embody a hybrid identity that fused elements of American evangelical Protestantism, particularly its view of piety, industriousness and literacy, with her Ottoman Syrian culture and Arabic language."

41 Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 5.

42 This is the title of Yusuf Qasm Khuri's dissertation, reprinted in 1995 (*Rajul al-Sabiq li-Asrihi*).

43 Arabic for "master" (see below).

44 Almost nothing is known about Bustani's siblings. According to Lindner ("Syrian Protestant Families"), one brother was named Kanaan. Sarruf and Nimr ("al-Marhum al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustani," 2) mention a total of three brothers. In 1858, missionaries visited one of Butrus's brothers, whom they did not name. See Bird, journal: January 1, 1854–December 10, 1867: ABC 76 (1), (HHL).

him as a private Arabic teacher and co-worker at the seminary in Beirut.<sup>45</sup> Around this time he met Rahil 'Ata, who had lived with and received her schooling from different mission families since she was a child.<sup>46</sup> They married in 1843 and had nine children.<sup>47</sup>

Between 1846 and 1848, Bustani directed the 'Abeih seminary with Cornelius Van Dyck and wrote several textbooks. He was among the founding members of the native Protestant church in Beirut, and was a member of its council of elders until 1878.<sup>48</sup> Although Bustani received theological training from the missionaries, he decided against ordination and instead pursued a successful career as a translator, author, and journalist. He was a key figure of the Syrian *nahḍa*, and today he remains one of the best known Syrian scholars of the nineteenth century. On May 1, 1883, he died of a heart attack, "pen in hand, surrounded by his books and manuscripts."<sup>49</sup> (Figure 7)

2. "May [he] live as burning and shining light ... in this dark land"<sup>50</sup>:  
Bustani's work for the mission

When Bustani came to Beirut at the age of 21, the missionaries were at first much more interested in his abilities than in winning him over to the Protestant faith, as was the case with many native helpers.<sup>51</sup> With his education at 'Ayn Warqā, Bustani was assured of a good career within the Maronite church – similar to As'ad al-Shidyaq, Jacob Wortabet, and Bishop Dionysios Carabet, who had served the

45 MH 37 (1841), in: ROS 3, 297.

46 More on Rahil 'Ata in: Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs*, 120–39; Booth, "“She Herself was the Ultimate Rule,”" 433–38; Lindner, "Rahil 'Ata al-Bustani."

47 According to Lindner's research ("Rahil 'Ata al-Bustani," 8), the children's names were Sarah Marie (1844–1866), Salim (1846–1884), Adelaide (or Ildid), Martha (1849–1933), Louise Kathrine (1853–1923), Emma, Amin Judson (1859–?), Najib William (1862–1919), Nasib (1866–?), and Alice (1870–1926). Sarah Bustani was named after Sarah L. Smith, who was the first to take Rahil in. She died from typhus in 1866. See Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs*, 137–38.

48 NECB minutes (June 21, 1878), 32.

49 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 484. His wife Rahil died in 1894. See Lindner, "Rahil 'Ata al-Bustani," 62.

50 MH 37 (1841), in: ROS 3, 297.

51 See Liebau, *Die indischen Mitarbeiter der Tranquebarmission*, 138. When Bustani was a teacher at the seminary, the mission sang his praises enthusiastically: "The exception above referred to is Butrus el-Bistany, teacher of Arabic in the Seminary. His case is of great interest ... and uniting uncommon capacity with professional zeal, he has elevated the character of the Seminary. His grammatical attainments are thorough – a branch of knowledge which is exceedingly rare in the country, and in which the boys have never before had suitable instruction. His department has been exemplary, and of his own accord he has conducted the usual Arabic religious exercises of the school – reading the Scriptures, with exposition and prayer. ... If he remains steadfast, we can do no less than generously sustain him, both for the value of his services and the great importance of his example. We must at all events be enabled to secure as far as possible the instruction which he now furnishes, or the Seminary must languish." See Syria Mission to Anderson (Beirut, April 24, 1841): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1.



Figure 7: Butrus al-Bustani

church before working for the American mission.<sup>52</sup> There were a number of circumstances that likely brought him to Beirut in 1840. The withdrawal of Egyptian troops eased the political situation in the region, encouraging many people to come to the city from the mountains.<sup>53</sup> Bustani's widowed mother could keep him from being sent to Rome for additional training since she needed his help to support herself and her other two sons. Thus, the young Syrian probably went to the city to look for work.<sup>54</sup> Henry Harris Jessup's explanation, which was published after Bustani's death, should be read with caution. According to Jessup, Bustani discovered the

52 Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 45, 78. More on these individuals in appendix II. For the theory that conversion can be a way out of certain life circumstances and a chance for a better future, see Thomas O'Dea, *The Sociology of Religion* (1966), 60, cited in: Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 93.

53 Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 76.

54 According to Tibawi ("The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani," 157), there is no evidence for the frequent assertion that Bustani was employed as a translator for the

doctrine of justification while reading the New Testament in Syriac; he then fled to Beirut, where he sought protection in Smith's house for two years, "lest he be shot by spies of the Maronite Patriarch."<sup>55</sup> On one hand, it is not surprising that, in the eyes of the missionaries, Bustani's move was driven by a search for religious meaning that led him to the missionaries. On the other hand, Bustani could only have met Smith in 1841, when Smith returned from the United States.<sup>56</sup>

Whether it was practical or religious motivations that brought him to Beirut, Bustani seemed to be looking for new challenges after ten years of studying and then teaching at 'Ayn Warqa. Only a year after his arrival in the city, Bustani had already distanced himself from his home church. While the Maronite patriarch attempted to win him back, he composed a tract about the corruption of the papacy.<sup>57</sup> Bustani converted between 1843 and 1844 and accompanied William M. Thomson and Cornelius Van Dyck (with whom he had been close friends since 1841) to 'Abeih, in order to establish a mission station and school.<sup>58</sup> In 1845 the mission sent him to Hasbeiya, where a growing number of villagers wanted to renounce the Greek Orthodox faith and needed the mission's support. Under Bustani's leadership, the town's new school became the most disciplined and orderly of all the mission schools.<sup>59</sup> Eli Smith befriended the talented young man in 1841. A close relationship developed between the two, with Smith assuming the role of mentor and supporter.<sup>60</sup> In 1845, Smith wrote about the young Syrian:

[He] is remarkable for his sprightliness ... he showed a good mind, susceptible of serious impressions, and he particularly distinguished himself by the ease and perfect accuracy with which he committed to memory the Assembly's Catechism. In decision and boldness as a Protestant, he was surpassed by none.<sup>61</sup>

Due to animosities with the Greek Orthodox patriarch, the situation in Hasbeiya was tense. For a while Bustani was there by himself because he did not think that the presence of foreign missionaries was advisable, as he wrote: "Not that you would be in personal danger, but your presence would more and more incense the Greeks; and if any disorders should occur, the missionaries would be blamed as disturbers of the peace."<sup>62</sup> The mission followed Bustani's advice, showing once again how much the Americans depended upon their native colleagues. The young Syrian from Dbayye soon became one of the few highly promising native candidates for pastoral office.<sup>63</sup> Bustani led the committee of native Protestants that met several

British army. Smith wrote that Bustani gradually became more familiar with English. See Smith to Anderson (Beirut, December 31, 1842): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (159).

55 Jessup, "Muallim Butrus el-Bistany," 275.

56 MH 37 (1841), in: ROS 3, 309.

57 Ibid., 297.

58 MH 40 (1844), in: ROS 3, 389.

59 MH 41 (1845), in: ROS 3, 411.

60 Smith married Rahil 'Ata and Butrus al-Bustani in the summer of 1843. See Smith to Anderson ('Abeih, August 3, 1843): ABC 60, Box 2 (105). Since Hetty Smith's and Rahil's children were about the same age, the families remained close. See Lindner, "Rahil 'Ata al-Bustani," 57.

61 MH 41 (1845), in: ROS 3, 411.

62 Ibid., 434.

63 See also N.A. Keyes's report on the "native helpers": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (21).

times in 1847 and 1848, in order to draft a petition for founding the Beirut Church. One particular passage in the document sounds as if only the Protestant faith could overcome the country's confessional rivalries:

We were indeed of different sects: Greeks, Greek Catholics, Latins, Maronites and Armenians: but we have abandoned all the animosities and jealousies existing between the sects, wishing them no more to be mentioned among us, inasmuch as we have become members of one body in Christ ... all believers in him should be one in faith and love.<sup>64</sup>

Parallels with Bustani's writings from the 1860s and 1870s, about patriotism and peaceful coexistence (see below), are unmistakable. The Protestant faith seemed to offer a chance for harmony and a sense of unity. It had already become clear that Bustani's encounter with the mission would have a formative influence on his thought.

The petition was composed by Bustani, Elyas Fawaz, and sixteen other converts, although not all of their names are known. The petitioners believed that a new church should be led by a pastor from their own ranks, who would of course require the mission's support "in counsel and labors ... as a matter of necessity at the beginning."<sup>65</sup>

When the Beirut Church was founded between February and May 1848,<sup>66</sup> Bustani was already being considered as Smith's assistant for the Bible translation. Bustani, who was still teaching in 'Abeih, could not move back to Beirut until the summer of 1848.<sup>67</sup> Because of his leading role in founding the native Protestant congregation, he must have been considered as a pastoral candidate,<sup>68</sup> although there is no evidence of this in the historical sources. When Rufus Anderson visited the mission in Beirut in 1844, Bustani told him that he aspired to preach to others.<sup>69</sup> As Smith later reported, however, Bustani had already changed his mind by the end of that same year:

He then claimed that, as ordination would give him a permanent character, and cut him off from ways of acquiring a living now open to him, he must have a permanent lien for an adequate support, upon our society, or upon a parish, before taking upon himself the vows of the ministry.<sup>70</sup>

Under these circumstances, Anderson responded to Smith around 1847 that Bustani should not be pushed towards ordination.<sup>71</sup> However, Smith did not give up, and

64 "Translation of a Petition from the Native Protestants at Beirut to the American Missionaries": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4 (23).

65 Ibid.

66 An exact date of founding is not known. The petition was delivered to the mission on February 9, 1848 (see MH 44, 1848, in: ROS 3, 50), and the church's council of elders met for the first time on May 19, 1848 (see NECB minutes, May 19, 1848, 1).

67 Smith to Rev. D. Brigham (Bhamdoun, October 26, 1848): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (173). Mikha'il 'Araman (see appendix II, no. 9) replaced Bustani at the seminary. See Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 123.

68 Badr, "Mission to 'Nominal Christians,'" 294.

69 Anderson to the Syria Mission (On board the Turkish steamer, April 23, 1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.

70 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, June 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (199).

71 Anderson said this during Smith's final visit to the United States in 1846/47: *ibid.*

he encouraged his student Bustani to continue his theological studies, hoping that he might change his mind. By 1850, Anderson seems to have forgotten Bustani's earlier conditions, as he once again began to push for the mission helper's ordination, rejecting the argument that Bustani did not have enough time because of the translation.<sup>72</sup> Some missionaries thought that Bustani ought to end his work with Smith in order to devote himself to theological study, even if "this would involve the abandonment of the translation altogether." Smith countered: "I declared my belief that Butrus was not available." Did Smith hinder Bustani's ordination because of the Bible translation, or was he rather trying to protect Bustani, who still seemed uncertain about his ambitions? Smith's own answer was unclear: "I do not think he had changed the views which led him to abandon the ministry so long ago."<sup>73</sup> To Van Dyck, it seemed like the mission was preventing the Syrian scholar's ordination. In his aforementioned letter to Anderson from 1850, in which he criticized his colleagues' treatment of the Syrian Protestant, he assumed that Bustani would become the pastor of the Beirut Church, "but whether there will not be a practical difficulty made about it remains to be seen. I have great fears that such will be the case."<sup>74</sup> According to Van Dyck, Bustani was discouraged because the office of pastor within the native church (as defined by the mission) would not allow him enough independence so that he could dedicate himself entirely to his work.<sup>75</sup>

The insufficient compensation for Syrian employees of the mission was another sticking point for Bustani. For this reason, he sought a position as translator for the American consulate in Beirut, although he wanted to continue to work for the mission part-time. In 1851, Smith reported to Anderson that Bustani had accused Smith of preventing him from earning additional income from other activities. For this reason, Smith did not want to comment on Bustani's new plan.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, a private letter from Smith to Bustani in 1850 shows that Smith did intend to speak with the consul on Bustani's behalf, recommending his student for another position.<sup>77</sup> It seems reasonable to believe that Smith supported Bustani in all of his endeavors, but also that he might have represented this differently to the ABCFM. Van Dyck, who agreed with Bustani's decision to work for the American consul,<sup>78</sup> wrote in October 1850 that Bustani had taken the position at the consulate.<sup>79</sup> Smith's

72 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, June 27, 1850): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 13 (HHL).

73 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, June 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (199).

74 Van Dyck to Anderson ('Abeih, August 27, 1850): 5 (320). More on this extensive letter in chapter II, section 2.2 and chapter III, section 2.3.

75 Van Dyck to Anderson ('Abeih, October 21, 1850): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5. Thomson reported that Bustani was not prepared to change his mind about pastoral office until there was a significant change in the mission. See Thomson to Anderson ('Aytat, September 2, 1850): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (254); Badr, "Mission to 'Nominal Christians,'" 294.

76 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, June 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (199).

77 Smith to Bustani (Bhamdoun, October 12, 1850): ABC 50 (HHL).

78 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, June 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (199). According to Smith, Van Dyck also put in a good word for Bustani with the consul.

79 Bustani worked at the consulate until 1862, even serving as interim consul in 1857 while a search for the position was underway. After 1862, Salim al-Bustani assumed his father's position. See Tibawi, "The American Missionaries in Beirut," 167–68.

statements about the matter are contradictory. In the same letter (mentioned above) that he wrote to Anderson in 1851, stating that Bustani was not even interested in becoming a pastor, he wrote a few pages later: "Indeed I think he really looks forward to being a pastor of the church at Beirut, but he is fully conscious of his superior talents, and my apprehension is that he will not give them to the pastoral office, until his expectations<sup>80</sup> are realized. ..." Finally, Smith asked Anderson: "Shall we meet his wishes?"<sup>81</sup> After this letter, nothing more can be found on the topic in Smith's or Anderson's correspondence. The matter seemed to be put on hold. The self-assured Syrian made too many demands, and the mission wanted to maintain control over the pastoral office. In 1852, Bustani seemed resigned to the matter, declaring: "[M]y present resolution is to accept of [*sic*] no office either religious or secular that is public, for many reasons which I wish to keep to myself."<sup>82</sup>

In the following years Bustani continued his work for the mission, although he did not entirely dismiss the thought of being ordained as pastor, perhaps hoping that conditions for the office within the Syrian Protestant church would improve. In 1854, the Beirut Church asked to hire Bustani as its pastor, and the missionaries discussed the matter without him.<sup>83</sup> After questioning Bustani about his intentions, the committee concluded that there were "insuperable objections" to pursuing the matter further. The mission's records do not reveal the arguments that led to this conclusion.<sup>84</sup> Bustani was outraged, writing to Smith soon thereafter:

I would be ... grateful if you can, provided you have the time and the will, explain to me in a clear and detailed manner the reasons behind the negative response with which you have provided the church and the impediments you found in me. A lot of unreliable rumors related to the matter have been circulating and I fear that this might result in a misunderstanding. You are well aware that this is a highly important matter that has serious consequences, including on myself, and makes room at times for people meddling in matters that do not, otherwise, concern them. Since I know that the mission must have valid reasons for this delay, and in case there is no harm in sharing them with me, I hope that you clarify them to me, so that I can provide an informed and confident answer.<sup>85</sup>

In the fall of 1854, Bustani and John Wortabet met to discuss the incident. A letter from Wortabet to Smith indicates that Wortabet served as a kind of intermediary, as Bustani felt completely misunderstood. Although he still had not been told the reasons for the refusal, Bustani suspected that the mission believed that he would be uncooperative and instead pursue a more independent pastoral role. But according to Wortabet, these fears were unfounded; both Wortabet and Bustani agreed that "missionaries are ever to be looked to, and especially during the infantile condition of the native church for consultation, advice, and direction ... a certain kind and

80 These expectations had to do with higher pay, as well as being able to pursue professional ambitions in other fields.

81 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, June 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (199).

82 Bustani to Smith (Beirut, January 6, 1852): ABC 60 (12), (HHL).

83 As mentioned in the introduction to chapter III, Syrian helpers did not participate in the meetings of the mission's leaders. Personal matters were presented at these meetings in writing.

84 "Records of the Syria Mission and the Holy Land 1853–1860" (August 30, 1854): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1., 27.

85 Bustani to Smith ('Abeih, October 5, 1854): ABC 50 (HHL). (TA)

amount of supervision ought to be conceded of the native Evangelists to the missionaries.”

Wortabet emphasized that native pastors’ involvement in missionary work necessarily demanded direct cooperation. This meant, however, that Syrians and Americans had to work together as equals. According to Wortabet, there were limits to this cooperation, insofar as Syrian Protestants needed to feel “that [they] hold our Commission in the Gospel Ministry from God himself and that to Him primarily [they] are accountable for the expiation of [their] office.”<sup>86</sup>

With respect to the question of income, Anderson wrote in 1851: “The preaching of the gospel is a work, to be done at all hazard, and not a profession, a living, to be taken up and secured as a life estate.”<sup>87</sup> Similarly, Wortabet argued in his 1854 letter to Smith that “as soon as we consider ourselves as mere employees, we shall degrade the ministry into a profession for livings very little different from the corrupted system which we are seeking to abolish. Better form no native ministry if such is to be its character.”

Bustani responded to Wortabet that he was aware of his own stubbornness; he was often reluctant to change his opinions, and he behaved without respect towards some missionaries. Moreover, sometimes he was not as reliable as he ought to be. As a “minister,” he resolved to work on his failings. Bustani regretted not having the opportunity to explain himself before the mission – further evidence that such problems were never addressed together with Syrian helpers. Finally, he asked Wortabet to pass along the following explanation to the mission:

I feel it to be my duty to preach the Gospel of Christ to sinners, for this object I am ready to sacrifice worldly interests, personal views, and whatever stands in the way, that so far from falling out with the missionaries, I intend to cooperate harmoniously with them; and as my superiors in experience, knowledge and ability I will ever consider it a privilege to have access to their advice and judgement [*sic*].<sup>88</sup>

In April 1855, the members of the Beirut Church submitted a new request that the mission reconsider its decision about Bustani’s ordination.<sup>89</sup> Smith promised that they would review the case thoroughly, but he also admitted: “In the discussion then, it is my wish not to take a leading part, and I hope to be able to concur in whatever decision the Mission may arrive at.” Although in 1850/51 he had kept his own opinion on Bustani’s calling for spiritual office to himself, now he spoke openly and thoroughly about his concerns. Smith did not believe that his student and colleague was suited for the office of pastor in the Beirut Church. To begin, one who felt called to this office would not place conditions on accepting it.<sup>90</sup> Smith further recognized that Bustani’s strengths were secular, “and I use that word with no

86 Wortabet to Smith (Hasbeiya, October 20, 1854): ABC 60 (98), (HHL).

87 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, November 6, 1851): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 15 (HHL).

88 Wortabet to Smith (Hasbeiya, October 20, 1854): ABC 60 (98), (HHL).

89 “Records of the Syria Mission and the Holy Land 1853–1860” (April 5, 1855): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1., 32.

90 “[The conditions] have related chiefly to permanent connection with some responsible body, to support or to place of labor.” Bustani did not want to be called as pastor to a location other than Beirut. See Smith to Bustani (Beirut, March 1855): ABC 60 (105), (HHL).

obnoxious meaning, I say, rather secular, than spiritual.” The members of the Beirut congregation would also realize that their spiritual well-being and preparations for God’s kingdom were not Bustani’s main priority, but rather his personal interests in other areas: “Would your talent and aspiration for the extension and multiplicity of labor, find scope enough within so limited a sphere to satisfy you, and make you contented?”<sup>91</sup>

Bustani and the mission had different conceptions of calling and profession. Bustani wanted to lead a congregation without having to depend on it financially, which meant earning money through other activities. Smith, by contrast, explained that a “genuine” call meant devoting oneself entirely to a congregation, and thus depending on it financially as well. Smith did not mean to condemn his friend for the work that he pursued. On the contrary – he had confidence in Bustani, and he understood that Bustani was well respected and enjoyed great influence in the city.<sup>92</sup>

The committee’s final vote cannot be discerned from the historical records. The last entry on this topic notes that Smith conversed with leading members of the Beirut Church, without indicating the outcome of the discussion.<sup>93</sup> It can be assumed that the mission voted against installing Bustani as pastor of the native congregation in Beirut. Bustani may also have recognized that this was the right decision for the successful pursuit of his career.<sup>94</sup> Smith’s reports in the following years indicate that Bustani continued his work at the American Mission Press, particularly with the Bible translation. The affair did not mean, at least initially, that Bustani turned his back on the mission.<sup>95</sup> Even without the office of pastor, Bustani remained a leading member of the Beirut Church (see below). After Smith’s death in 1857, however, traces of the mission helper Bustani gradually disappeared from the records of the ABCFM.<sup>96</sup> He did not continue to work on the Bible translation with Van Dyck.<sup>97</sup> After a final letter<sup>98</sup> to Rufus Anderson, there are no further per-

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

93 “Records of the Mission to Syria and the Holy Land 1853–1860” (July 6, 1855): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1., 39. This is also the last entry on Bustani in the records of the mission.

94 Nevertheless, Walid Semaan has aptly noted that the development of an indigenous Protestant community suffered through the delay in ordaining a native pastor: “If the mission had ordained him, and if his far-reaching talents had been fully utilized, the new roots which were struck in the Lebanese-cultural religious soil at that time could have been more authentically Lebanese.” See Semaan, *Aliens at Home*, 90.

95 In September 1855, Bustani wrote a very friendly letter to Rufus Anderson and enclosed olive wood souvenirs from Jerusalem. See Bustani to Anderson (Souq al-Gharb, September 28, 1855): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (103).

96 Lindner, “Rahil ‘Ata al-Bustani,” 58: Smith’s widow and children returned to the United States. The De Forest family, with whom the Bustanis also had a good relationship, left Syria in 1854: “The Bustanis lost their closest associates and ties to the Mission.”

97 Although Van Dyck and Bustani were close friends, work within the mission no longer seemed to be possible for Bustani.

98 Bustani to Anderson (Beirut, January 25, 1860): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (124): “I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter from Boston and that of Mrs. Anderson addressed to me and to my wife accompanied by the two parcels which she kindly sent to me and to the (?) members of my family.”

sonal writings by Bustani in the ABCFM archive. In the 1860s, the *Missionary Herald* mentioned him in conjunction with the Native Missionary Society, which he founded in 1862, as well as with his National School (*Madrasa Wataniyya*), which opened in Beirut in 1862 (see below). Bustani pursued his own goals and no longer served the American Syria Mission.<sup>99</sup>

Regrettably, almost nothing is known about the Native Missionary Society – or as TIBAWI calls it, the *Jam'iyat Beyrut al-Injiliyya* (Beirut Bible Society).<sup>100</sup> Jessup reported that men, women, and children (!) from the Protestant community were among its approximately two hundred members.<sup>101</sup> Its meetings took place on the first Monday of every month. As president of the Native Missionary Society, Bustani<sup>102</sup> even wrote to the mission about its work. Like the Syria Mission itself, the society sent its own missionaries to different regions, commissioned colporteurs, and published a monthly *Missionary Herald* in Arabic (500 copies per issue).<sup>103</sup> It is surprising how little the Syria Mission reported on its native counterpart, since its foremost goal was, after all, to missionize the land with native assistance.<sup>104</sup>

Bustani was among the leading members of the indigenous Protestant community, but it seems as if the mission – and later the college – attempted to curb his influence. Henry Harris Jessup was a great admirer of Bustani, but Daniel Bliss (who later became president of the SPC) clearly begrudged Bustani's success. In one of the letters to his wife Abby, which were newly published in 1993, Bliss criticized Bustani's frequent absences from the services at the Beirut Church.

It is a great pity that such a man should be the leading man on all church matters, but no changes will be made. ... The truth will prevail notwithstanding the selfishness, pride and excessive vanity of Butros and all like him. So it has been in all ages of the church, those who seem to be the most powerful, the most influential are the feeblest elements in the church if not counted absolute hindrances.<sup>105</sup>

99 Shaw argues ("Butrus al-Bustani and the American Missionaries, 82–83) that Bustani did not turn away or distance himself from the mission, since he continued to cooperate with the Americans after founding his National School. While one cannot say that Bustani turned away from the mission, an emotional distancing is apparent due to events in the second half of the nineteenth century (see below).

100 Tibawi, "The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani," 171 (note 120). The 1864 *Missionary Herald* referred to "friends of Syrian evangelization." See MH 60 (1864), in: ROS 5, 91.

101 "Annual Report of the Beirut Station of the Syrian Mission for the year 1862": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (32). The women members included around forty widows from Hasbeiya. The twenty-five children were orphans, probably from the orphanage of the Kaiserswerth deaconesses.

102 According to Jessup, Bustani led the society for twenty years. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 484.

103 MH 58 (1862), in: ROS 5, 49; MH 60 (1864), in: *ibid.*, 91.

104 The annual reports of the Beirut mission station occasionally mention the Native Missionary Society. In 1869, the society and the American Syria Mission hired a common colporteur, suggesting that the two organizations worked together in a friendly way. See "Annual Report of Beirut Station, 1869": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (39).

105 Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (August 10, 1873), in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 46.

When the Ottoman pasha ordered the American press to close in 1874,<sup>106</sup> Bustani used the opportunity to write an inflammatory article against foreign influences – particularly foreign schools, as Bliss reported:

The whole city is discussing his meanness in doing it – when his position in society has been made by his connection with Americans. He has lost character in this. Some of our students are full of wrath and will show him up if not in the Beirut papers of the Constantinople Arabic paper, through some articles which they will get published and circulate. He is a bad, bold man – a stumbling block. He is not nearly so well liked as formerly.<sup>107</sup>

Bustani's discouragement with foreign schools may have had to do with the failed cooperation between his National School and the SPC, as will be described below. In the 1870s, there was apparently open disagreement between him and the mission. The mission was able to avoid closing its press, despite the pasha's order that it be temporarily shut down. According to Bliss, Bustani nonetheless spread the word that the press had closed and had to pay a fine. Bliss regretted that Bustani remained a leader of his church, stating that Bustani

has lost friends by this last move of his but will gain back all the feeble minded ones. I think just as much of him as I have for years – I shall stand firm if all forsake him! He is a bad man. This Church will go to pieces if he rules it much longer. Neither Dr. Thomson nor Dr. Jessup have the courage to *take the Bull by the horns*. It is too bad to take up so much space in my letter with the Pasha and Bustani.<sup>108</sup>

No one was more critical of Bustani than Daniel Bliss, although Bustani's prominence was apparently a thorn in the side of many missionaries. As an active church elder, he presumably hindered the mission's continued influence over the native congregation. Because of a lack of sources, however, further evidence is unavailable. On June 21, 1878, Bustani attended his last council meeting at the Beirut Church. For unknown reasons, he withdrew his involvement from the Syrian Protestant congregation.<sup>109</sup>

### 3. *Al-Madrassa al-Wataniyya*: A model of secularism and national pride

In *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, Henry Harris Jessup recalled that a Mrs. Watson from England had opened a boys' school with money from a London committee around September 1862.<sup>110</sup> The school was located in Bustani's house in the Beirut neigh-

106 More on this incident in chapter I, section 2.5.

107 Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (March 16, 1874), in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 225. Unfortunately, the editor did not identify the article under discussion.

108 Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (March 18, 1874), in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 227.

109 NECB minutes (June 21, 1878), 32.

110 There are contradictory statements about the year that the school was founded. Secondary literature frequently mentions 1863, as does that year's annual report (see ABC 16.8.1., vol. 6 [33]). Butrus al-Bustani's article in *al-Jinan* (vol. 4, 1873, 626) and Jessup's memoirs (*Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 484) identify 1862 as the year of the school's founding.

borhood Zoqaq al-Blat.<sup>111</sup> Soon thereafter, Bustani assumed responsibility for the approximately thirty boys, naming the institution the “National School” (*al-Madrassa al-Wataniyya*).<sup>112</sup> According to the Syria Mission’s annual report from 1863, there were already 115 students by the end of the year.<sup>113</sup> To learn more about this school, one must turn to the few eyewitness account that remain.<sup>114</sup> Minutes, annual reports, and student rosters – all of which the *Madrassa Wataniyya* certainly had – can no longer be found and are presumably lost.

Initiative for the school probably did not come from Mrs. Watson alone, but rather from Bustani,<sup>115</sup> who had many years of teaching experience in ‘Ayn Warqa, as well as at the seminaries in Beirut and ‘Abeih. Since 1856, he was both a member and secretary of the supervisory board for the English Lebanon Schools.<sup>116</sup> He developed course plans for these schools, as well as for the school founded by the Druze governor (*mutaṣārrif*) of Mount Lebanon, Dawud Pasha, in ‘Abeih in 1862. Here he earned the honorary title *mu‘allim* (master/teacher), which stayed with him for the rest of his life.<sup>117</sup>

Jessup reported that in 1861, five years before the founding of the SPC, there was discussion within the mission about cofounding a college with Bustani. An initial plan was to send both Bustani and George Ford to England, in order to collect donations for the project. However, some missionaries raised concerns about the binational cooperation, and Ford made the trip alone in 1862.<sup>118</sup> It surely is no coincidence that Bustani started the National School in 1862, likewise with English support. As already depicted in chapter I, section 1.5, preparations to establish the SPC under American leadership began in 1862. The Beirut mission station’s annual report from 1863 does not indicate any ill will towards Bustani’s institution. Since members of different religious communities were willing to pay to have their children attend a Protestant school, there seemed to be no further obstacles to establishing the SPC: “It is plain that the movement for a College was not commenced a moment too soon.”<sup>119</sup> In the years to come, however, opinions towards Bustani’s institution would change considerably within the mission.

111 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 270. Without citing his source, Hitti (*Lebanon in History*, 462) states that Bustani first established the school in ‘Abeih and then moved it to Beirut. According to the *Missionary Herald*, the school was founded in Beirut in 1863.

112 The translation of the school’s name as “National School” has established itself in the secondary literature, although Tibawi (“The American Missionaries in Beirut,” 171) notes that, at the time, *watan* would not yet have been translated as “nation,” but rather “homeland” or “fatherland.” With this reservation, I use the familiar translation “National School” here as well.

113 MH 60 (1864), in: ROS 5, 91.

114 Jens Hanssen reviewed these eyewitness accounts in his study of the Beirut neighborhood Zoqaq al-Blat. See Hanssen, “The Birth of an Education Quarter,” 152–54.

115 Jessup also wrote that Bustani founded the school with his own money and with financial assistance from America and England. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 484.

116 For the Lebanon Schools, see chapter I, section 2.3.

117 Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-‘Arabiyya*, 89; Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, 445; Khuri, *Rajul Sabiq li-‘Asrihi*, 53–54.

118 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 240.

119 “Annual Report of Beirut Station for 1863”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (33).

“It is not a Missionary school nor connected with our work,” the 1863 annual report stated, “but the Bible is read at morning and evening prayer which all the pupils are obliged to attend.”<sup>120</sup> Although the National School was directed by one of the most respected Protestants in the city, it was not religiously oriented. According to DAYA, Bustani was initially uncertain about introducing some reformist ideas within the leadership of the school. He asked for the missionaries’ advice, but he broke off his cooperation with them once he recognized that the Americans had only their own interests in mind. DAYA writes that the resulting animosities did not bother Bustani.<sup>121</sup> It is questionable whether Bustani needed to seek this kind of help from the missionaries. He moved in the same circles as other important intellectuals and reformers, both Christian and Muslim, who were pursuing similar goals.<sup>122</sup> Without a doubt, the *Madrasa Wataniyya* was a bold experiment. The school’s multiconfessionalism meant that all students received instruction in their own religion, and they could participate in religious services and celebrations with an accompanying instructor.<sup>123</sup> Nothing like this had existed before in a Syrian school. Years after the religiously motivated violence of the 1860 civil war, the National School came to represent the ideal of a secular society: “The makeup of our society resembles that of National School. The students ... are siblings from a single homeland; differences in religion do not affect how they work, study, and live.”<sup>124</sup>

Teachers and students from Syria’s different religious communities set aside religious animosities to pursue the common goal of education.

The school welcomes students from all religious groups (*tauwā’if*), creeds (*milal*), and backgrounds (*ajnās*), without casting judgment on their convictions or forcing another confession upon them (*tajabarhum bi-itbā’ madhhab ghayr madhhab*). ... the sons of this nation have earned a place at the forefront of their generation, regardless of their creed or religion. Knowledge and progress will allow them to see and hear the damage that has been wrought by religious fanaticism and hostile elements (*ta’asubāt al-ṭā’ifiyya wa l-’anāṣir al-ḥudūdīyya*). We must be willing to trust those who are different, so that the fatherland will not fall behind and sink into disgrace.<sup>125</sup> (Figure 8 and 9)

An array of subjects were taught at the school, including the Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, French, English, Greek, and Latin languages. Creative writing, rhetoric, music, and photography were offered alongside the usual academic subjects.<sup>126</sup> Well-respected scholars made up the national and international faculty, contributing to the

120 Ibid.

121 Daya does not, however, provide a source. He adds that these events led the Maronite metropolitan al-Dabas to state that Bustani would return to the Maronite church before the end of his life. See “al-Mu’allim Butrus al-Bustani 125 ‘Aman ‘ala Wafatih,” 2008.

122 Hanssen, “The Birth of an Education Quarter.”

123 Bustani, “al-Madrassa al-Wataniyya,” 627 (TA); Tibawi, “The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College,” 275–76. Around thirty students regularly attended the services of the Protestant Beirut Church. See MH 60 (1864), in: ROS 5, 91.

124 “*An takūn hay’atina al-ijtimā’iyya ka-l-madrassa waṭaniyya. Fa-’in ṭulāb ... ikhwa waṭaniyīn lā ta’athīr li-ikhtilāf al-adiyān fī a’ mālihim wa durūsihim wa ma’ishatihim.*” See Salim Bustani, “Butrus Bustani,” *al-Jinan* 14 (1883), 321, cited in: Khuri, *Rajul Sabiq li-’Asrihi*, 68.

125 Bustani, “al-Madrassa al-Wataniyya,” 627.

126 Ibid.

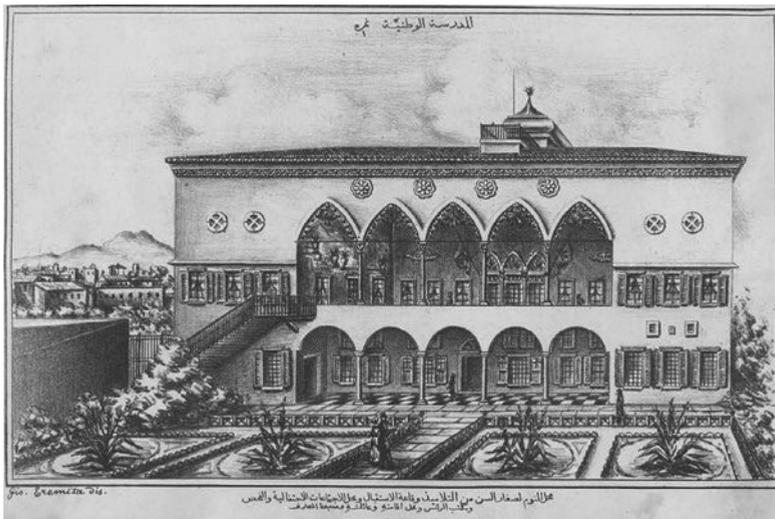


Figure 8: *al-Madrasa al-Wataniyya* (Dormitories for the young students, entrance hall, auditorium and examination room, office and residence of the president and his family)

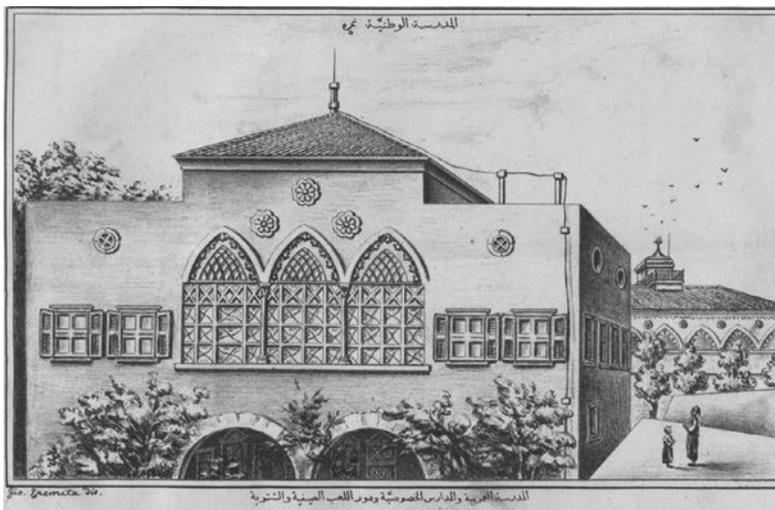


Figure 9: *al-Madrasa al-Wataniyya* (Elementary school and private schools, recreation rooms for summer and winter)

school's outstanding reputation. The renowned poet and author Nasif al-Yaziji, who had worked for the mission for years, taught Arabic at the National School. The same subject was later taught by Yusuf al-Asir, who assisted Van Dyck with the Bible translation. At the beginning of the 1870s, Ahmad 'Abbas (from Al-Azhar University in Cairo) was hired to teach Islamic theology and philosophy. Many of the students who graduated from the *Madrasa Wataniyya* "became leading Beirut

intellectuals, working as educators, publishers, journalists and Beirut municipal councillors.”<sup>127</sup> Bustani was aware of the graduates’ potential as future leaders of their country, and he wanted to prepare them accordingly. In 1873 he founded the *Jam‘iyat Zahrat al-Adab* (Flower of Arts Society), which sought to promote the acquisition of knowledge as well as oral debating skills. Students and graduates of the National School who participated in the society wrote and performed theatrical works.<sup>128</sup>

Although Bustani’s secular school differed from other religious and missionary schools, it entered into an agreement of cooperation with the SPC in 1865. Jessup and the Board of Managers sought a three-year agreement,<sup>129</sup> so that the SPC could rent space within the National School for its preparatory department.<sup>130</sup> The National School was to make its instructors and resources available for students preparing to study at the SPC.<sup>131</sup> From the very beginning, the agreement harbored potential for conflict between the headstrong presidents of both institutions, Butrus al-Bustani and Daniel Bliss.<sup>132</sup> Already in 1864, William Thomson wrote to Bliss (who was away) on behalf of the Board of Managers, stating that cooperation with Bustani would not be possible “unless he will consent to greatly modify his present operations. It is my opinion that matters will very likely take such a turn as will enable us to make a profitable use of his talents [*sic*], energy and experience, but things are not yet ripe for such measures.”<sup>133</sup>

Cooperation between the institutions began in 1865, but it was close to falling apart just two years later. The SPC was justified in its fears that Bustani would not

127 Hanssen, “The Birth of an Education Quarter,” 152; *ibid.* (note 33): Sulayman al-Bustani (1856–1925), Butrus’s cousin, became a government minister and senator under the Young Turks, and he also translated Homer’s *Odyssey*. Zaydan, “Tarikh al-Nahda al-‘Ilmiyya al-Ak-hira fi Misr wa l-Sham,” 238: Salim Bek Taqla became the editor of the Egyptian newspaper *al-Ahram*, which still exists today. See also Cioeta, “Islamic Benevolent Societies,” 43 (note 5); and Hanssen, “Fin de siècle Beirut,” 169–70: ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani attended the National School. He later founded the Islamic scientific society *Jam‘iyat al-Funun* (Society of Arts) and edited the society’s journal, *Thamarat al-Funun* (Fruits of Art).

128 Raffoul, “Butrus al-Bustani’s Contribution to Translation,” 150.

129 Jessup to Anderson (Beirut, January 27, 1865): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (215): “I think appearances strongly indicate that the school will be brought into connection with the college without difficulty.” Jessup to Bliss (November 23, 1865): AA.2.3.1.10.2: “Mr. Bistany, is accepted, and I see nothing in the way of cooperation at once ...”

130 Penrose, “*That they may have life*”, 25. Without mentioning any names, Bliss noted briefly in his *Reminiscences*: “We were housed for two years in four or five rooms of an insignificant building.” Bliss’s aversion to Bustani was evident. See Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 187.

131 Students at the college also came from other indigenous religious schools, as well as from the mission seminary in ‘Abeih. See Bliss, “A Statement” (Beirut, December 31, 1866): AA.2.3.1.10.4.

132 As with John Wortabet (see chapter III, section 2), David Stuart Dodge (an English teacher who later served on the SPC’s Board of Trustees) rarely missed an opportunity to disparage Bustani in his correspondence with Daniel Bliss. “Dodge ... lambasted Bustani as a tricky and underhanded child of the East. ‘He must be assigned a place and be kept there ... and never be regarded as one whom we can fully trust in any particular.’” See Dodge to Bliss (July 25, 1865): AA.2.3.1.5., cited in: Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 211.

133 Thomson to Bliss (Shimlan, July 20, 1864): AA.2.3.1.10.1.

abide by the college's principles. Although they shared the same building, students at the *Madrasa Wataniyya* were subject to different rules than students preparing for the SPC: "Discipline was very hard to maintain, to say the least."<sup>134</sup> The differences in opinion were wide-ranging, suggesting that the SPC's ability to control the National School was at issue. All this understandably tested Bustani's patience. When he hired four new teachers for the preparatory department without consulting the SPC, the Board of Managers responded in protest by withholding the teachers' promised wages. The SPC also did not fully distribute funds that had been donated by Mrs. Watson, who continued to support the *Madrasa Wataniyya*. When Bustani complained, the Board of Managers asked him to provide an itemized list of expenditures. Finally, at the beginning of March 1867, Bustani sent the SPC a formal letter of complaint. He indignantly brushed aside the college's criticisms. Moreover, he stated that the relationship with the college was harming his own institution, since proselytism and restrictions on freedom were incompatible with the outlook of the National School. Similarities in the curricula of the National School and the SPC meant that they were competitors. He further complained "that the discipline of the College is less strict, in some respects, than that of said Institution, and therefore demoralizing to it; in that students from said Institution have been covertly enticed to enter the College. ..."<sup>135</sup> In return, the Board of Managers asserted that the existing three-year agreement guaranteed rent only, not services and wages for the director and his staff.<sup>136</sup> Nevertheless, the college hoped to maintain the preparatory department until at least 1869, since it did not have another preparatory school.<sup>137</sup> Bustani and the Board of Managers came to an agreement about wages at the end of 1867, and cooperation between the institutions appears to have held until 1868 or 1869.<sup>138</sup> Minutes of the Board of Managers from these two years no longer mention the *Madrasa Wataniyya*. Jessup's 1874 book, *Women of the Arabs*, mentions that around 150 students attended the National School.<sup>139</sup> Its enrollment, however, declined steadily because of the many new religious schools that were

134 Penrose, "That they may have life", 29.

135 "Report of the Committee on the Preparatory Department of the Syrian Protestant College, adopted by the Board of Managers" (Beirut, March 8, 1867), in: "Records of the Board of Managers of the Syrian Protestant College": AA.2.1.2., folder 1, 59–60. The records of the Board of Managers contain an undated memorandum that reads like a list of complaints about the SPC ("4th Seducing the pupils and teachers of the Madrasat Wataneah and Prept. Dept. to leave the same and enter the College," etc.). The document presumably has to do with Bustani's complaints from 1867. See AA.2.1.2., folder 8.

136 "Record of the Board of Managers of the Syrian Protestant College" (Beirut, March 8, 1867): AA.2.1.2., folder 1, 46.

137 A subsequent debate was whether the seminary in 'Abeih should become a preparatory department for the college. In 1874, the question remained unresolved. If the seminary was not to be directly integrated within the SPC, Bliss expected the mission to cover its costs: Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (Beirut, January 6, 1874), in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 166. "We shall not consent to pay for anything over which we have not absolute control."

138 Board of Managers to the Executive Committee (Beirut, October 29, 1867): AA.2.1.2., folder 2.

139 Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs*, 136.

founded in the area.<sup>140</sup> In 1877, Bustani decided to close the school upon the advice of his friends.<sup>141</sup> The sudden demise of the National School seems strange, given the high praise – and even a special award<sup>142</sup> – that Bustani had received from the government for the school’s success and unique nature.<sup>143</sup> The school’s continued existence presumably depended too strongly on Bustani himself. After 1875, he turned his attentions to his ambitious encyclopedia project, *Da’irat al-Ma’arif* (see below). Finances may also have played a role. In his article on the *Madrasa Wataniyya* in the journal *al-Jinan*, Bustani noted that parents did not always pay the tuition.<sup>144</sup> He once said that he would even sell his own house to keep the school open.<sup>145</sup> In the end, the circle of benefactors for this unique school may not have been as large as its reputation suggested.

#### 4. *Ḥubb al-waṭan* (Love for the nation): Bustani’s career as an author, journalist, and publisher

In the 1860s, Bustani’s career took a significant turn. From this point forward, he devoted himself largely to secular activities, such as founding the National School, starting up three periodicals, and publishing numerous works of non-fiction. Although his later work no longer directly involved the mission, the Americans had an unmistakable influence on Bustani’s career and way of thinking. During his lifetime, Bustani’s greatest fame came from his accomplishments as a journalist and encyclopedist. His two-volume dictionary *Muḥit al-Muḥit* (The Breadth of the Ocean), published in 1869/70, and the bimonthly journal *al-Jinan* (The Gardens),<sup>146</sup> which began in 1870, are among his life’s most important milestones. These projects got their start much earlier than has previously been depicted. As mentioned in chapter II, section 1.8, Bustani’s correspondence with his mentor Eli Smith in 1855 reveals his intent to publish a dictionary for schools, “modeled after the format of foreign dictionaries.”<sup>147</sup> Bustani (and presumably the entire team responsible for the Bible

140 Makarius, “al-Ma’arif fi Suriyya,” 390. Jessup confirmed that the school closed after fifteen years. See Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 484. Jens Hanssen’s observation that there were more than three hundred students at the *Madrasa Wataniyya* in 1910 appears to be incorrect. See Hanssen, “The Birth of an Education Quarter,” 147.

141 Sarruf and Nimr, “al-Marhum al-Mu’allim Butrus al-Bustani,” 5.

142 Jessup, “Muallim Butrus el-Bistany,” 275.

143 See the letter of thanks from Muhammad Ru’uf Pasha, the governor of Beirut, to Bustani in *al-Jinan* 2 (1871), 17, cited in: Khuri, *Rajul Sabiq li-’Asrihi*, 65.

144 Bustani, “al-Madrasa al-Wataniyya,” 628; Jandora, “Buṭrus al-Bustānī,” 154.

145 Sarruf and Nimr, “al-Marhum al-Mu’allim Butrus al-Bustani,” 5.

146 In the first issue, Bustani wrote that the journal would be like a garden in paradise, with delicious fruits and much to see and hear. Cited in Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-’Arabiyya*, 45. Daya has pointed to the similarity between the title of the journal and Bustani’s last name, which also means “garden.” The same is true of his later two periodicals, *al-Janna* and *al-Junayna* (see below). See Daya, “al-Mu’allim Butrus al-Bustani 125 ‘Aman ‘ala Wafatihi.”

147 Bustani to Smith (Souq al-Gharb, July 18, 1855): ABC 50, Box 3, (HHL). After Bustani’s death, Ya’qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr recalled that he had already begun to work on the dictionary during the Bible translation (“al-Marhum al-Mu’allim Butrus al-Bustani,” 2). Glaß, “Butrus

translation) recognized that the use of classical dictionaries was too difficult for most readers. In an 1859 speech, Bustani said that having dictionaries that were simpler and easier to use was essential, so that Arabs could learn their own language correctly.<sup>148</sup> Contemporary readers' inability to understand classical literature because of the difficult vocabulary had already been a topic of discussion in the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences (1847–1852).<sup>149</sup> In his 1855 letter to Smith, Bustani wrote that he had already drafted an outline, which Smith was supposed to look over. There was also a contract with the American press, according to which the proceeds were to be evenly divided.<sup>150</sup> Cooperation on this project with the mission seems to have fallen apart after Smith's death. In 1869, Bustani published the first volume of *Muhit al-Muhit* with the American Mission Press; the second volume appeared with own press, the *Matba'at al-Ma'arif* (Press of Knowledge).<sup>151</sup> In the introduction to the first edition, Bustani described his work as "a small service from a lover of the fatherland (*muḥibb lil-waṭan*) whose highest ambitions and aims are to witness the progress of his compatriots in learning and civilization through the medium of their noble language."<sup>152</sup> Bustani received a monetary prize for the publication, as well as an honorary medal that he wore in his most famous portrait (see above).<sup>153</sup>

The idea for a periodical that would feature a wide range of informative articles also did not emerge only at the end of the 1860s. According to a letter that Smith wrote to Bustani in March 1855, both men were planning to publish a journal together, and Smith hoped to acquire English-language articles for the journal while in the United States.<sup>154</sup> Because of the events surrounding Bustani's candidacy for pastoral office at the Beirut Church, however, Smith suggested putting off the project until later. Under the helm of Bustani and his son Salim, the first issue of *al-Jinan* appeared in January 1870. The encyclopedic journal<sup>155</sup> was "illustrated

al-Bustani (1819–1883)," 11: "[Bustani] did not arrange the lemmata by rhyme, as in classical Arabic lexicography, but rather placing root words in alphabetical order. He also arranged all of the word forms that belonged to a root within one key word."

148 Bustani, *Khutba fi Adab al-'Arab*, 23.

149 Van Dyck, "Fi Ladhat al-'Ilm wa Fawa'idhi," in: Khuri, *Al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li-l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 31: "How many natives enjoy reading maqama [Arabic poetry] by al-Hariri, or the diwan by al-Mutanabbi, or other diwans and volumes of poetry? I think that most would put these [works] down after only a short time, because of the many words they do not understand."

150 Bustani to Smith (Souq al-Gharb, July 18, 1855): ABC 50, Box 3, (HHL); Tibawi, "The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani," 172–73.

151 Bustani founded the press in 1867, together with Khalil Sarkis. See Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 166.

152 *Muhit al-Muhit*, vol. 1, 848, translated and cited by Tibawi, "The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani," 172–73.

153 Zaydan, *Tarajim Mashahir al-Sharq fi l-Qarn at-Tasi' Ashar*, 27; Tibawi, "The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani," 173.

154 Smith to Bustani (Beirut, March 1855): ABC 60 (105), (HHL).

155 Bustani himself used the word *jarida* (newspaper) to describe *al-Jinan* in its first issue, as the term *majalla* (journal) was not widely used before 1884. Publishers like Khalil al-Khuri (*Hadiqat al-Akhhbar*) also borrowed the term *jurnāl* from European languages. See Daya, "al-Mu' alim Butrus al-Bustani 125 'Aman 'ala Wafatihi." On the significance of *majalla*, see Glaß, *Der Muqatafat und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 8.

by wood-cuts made by a native artist, and [had] a circulation of about 1500.”<sup>156</sup> Through the missionaries, Bustani had already experienced printing’s impressive potential, which he now could act upon himself.<sup>157</sup> Salim al-Bustani also published the newspaper *al-Janna* (The Garden), which appeared twice a week.<sup>158</sup> Together with Butrus’s cousin Sulayman, Salim additionally published the financial paper *al-Junayna* (The Garden), which appeared four times a week.<sup>159</sup> The expansion of imports and exports created demand for up-to-date information about politics and trade.<sup>160</sup>

*Al-Jinan* modeled itself after European journals that likewise covered scientific, cultural, historic, economic, and commercial topics. In Europe, the use of this knowledge had already borne fruit, as Bustani wrote in the first issue of *al-Jinan*.<sup>161</sup> Many articles about Europe or America were translations from Western periodicals, a practice that was also typical of the Syria Mission’s Arabic-language publications.<sup>162</sup> Although only a few articles were penned by Bustani himself, JOHN W. JANDORA has noted in his analysis of the journal that Bustani took care “that the articles and editorials of *al-Jinān* were consistent with – or, at least, not contrary to – his own social philosophy.”<sup>163</sup> In this project, as with many others, Bustani encouraged the collaboration of his colleagues and supported their own efforts in return.<sup>164</sup>

156 Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs*, 136.

157 Jandora, “Butrus al-Bustānī,” 146.

158 Glaß (“Von *Mir’āt al-Ahwāl* zu *Tamarāt al-Funūn*,” 41) cites a colorful report by Alfred von Kremer (“Ein Jahr in Beirut,” *Das Ausland* 7 (February 12, 1872), 151: “It is remarkable how quickly another, somewhat more independent, paper has been able to attain a wide readership. This is Bistany’s newspaper, which is called ‘Dschenne,’ or ‘The Garden.’ It is well edited, with telegrams, feature articles, and plenty of letters; it seldom goes so far as to weakly criticize government rules. ... If you stroll through Beirut’s narrow, crowded bazaars, it’s quite surprising to see all of the Arab merchants in their booths, Dschenne in hand, reading attentively.”

159 More on these journals in: Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs*, 136; Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East*, 34–36; Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 135–39.

160 Sarruf and Nimr, “al-Marhum al-Mu’ allim Butrus al-Bustani,” 6.

161 *Al-Jinan* 1 (1870): 1, cited in: Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East*, 34. The popularization of science and literature in the nineteenth century led to a wide array of periodicals like the *Illustrierte deutsche Monatshefte* and the *Grenzbote*. See M. Nissen, “Wissenschaft für gebildete Kreise: Zum Entstehungskontext der Historischen Zeitschrift,” in: Stöckel, *Das Medium Wissenschaftszeitschrift*, 30–31.

162 Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East*, 34: “Summaries of current events in Europe, chapters from its history, and translations from the European press and its literature were presented along with Arab literary and historical pieces.” See also the descriptions of *Majmū’ Fawa’id* and *al-Nashra* in chapter II, sections 1.5 and 2.5.

163 Jandora, “Butrus al-Bustānī,” 148.

164 *Ibid.*, 148 and 194: Contributors to *al-Jinan* included Cornelius Van Dyck, Ibrahim al-Yaziji (son of Nasif al-Yaziji), as well as Luwis Sabunji (teacher at the SPC and editor of the journals *al-Nahla* and *al-Najah*). See Tibawi, “The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College,” 277; and Holt, “Narrative and Reading Public in 1870s Beirut,” 63.

The title page of every *al-Jinan* issue bore a motto taken from an Islamic hadith: *ḥubb al-waṭan*<sup>165</sup> *min al-īmān*<sup>166</sup> (*Love for the nation is an article of faith*).<sup>167</sup> It was an extension of the idea that had previously inspired the *Madrasa Wataniyya*, as well the eleven *Nafir Suriyya* (The Syrian Clarion) pamphlets that Bustani had written in 1860.<sup>168</sup> Confessional feuding had reached a peak during the civil war of 1860, leading Bustani to believe that religious conflicts were the product of ignorance and intolerance, and that these could only be countered through knowledge and enlightenment.<sup>169</sup> This was the decisive moment for Bustani's pivot towards secularism. He continued to advocate for education, a hallmark of Protestantism and the mission, which had also become a rallying point for many Syrian intellectuals. But religious education that sought to uphold divisions between faith communities would not solve the problems in Ottoman Syria. Peace in the region would come only through the conviction that Syrians were members of *one* nation, regardless of the religion they practiced. Bustani addressed his eleven pamphlets from 1860 and 1861 "to the sons of the homeland," signing them each with *muḥibb al-waṭan* (he who loves the homeland). The pamphlets' author remained anonymous, presenting himself as a secularly oriented patriot<sup>170</sup>, not as a member of the Protestant community. "Syria, known as Barr al-Sham or 'Arabistan, is our fatherland,"<sup>171</sup> wrote Bustani. Members of this homeland ought to strive to build a civilized society<sup>172</sup> and fight for the common good.<sup>173</sup> Three conditions were essential to this vision: (1.) True religion, representing tolerance, peace, and brotherhood,<sup>174</sup> (2.) Political rules "which care . . . for the good of the people and their welfare, success, wealth, knowledge, and civilization,"<sup>175</sup> and (3.) Sources of knowledge "such as schools, printing presses, journals, and commerce, which get people closer like one

165 *Waṭan* originally meant "place of residence." Influenced by European ideas of nation and nationality, the term increasingly came to mean "homeland" or "fatherland," inspiring a sense of social belonging, and exercising a formative moral and political influence. See Philipp, *Ġurġī Zaidān*, 87.

166 Cited in Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al- 'Arabiyya*, 45.

167 *Nafir Suriyya* 4 (October 25, 1860): "In fact, was it not stated in the Hadith that the love of fatherland is an article of faith?" (TA)

168 For a linguistic analysis of the pamphlets, see Jandora, "Buṭrus al-Bustānī," 76–97; and S.P. Sheehi, "Inscribing the Arab Self: Buṭrus al-Bustānī and Paradigms of Subjective Reform," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 27, no. 1 (2000): 7–24.

169 Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 50.

170 Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 207.

171 *Nafir Suriyya* 4 (October 25, 1860). (TA)

172 Here, the word used for civilization is *tamaddun*, which is derived from *madina* (city) "and now means achieving internal and external refinement and acquiring knowledge, manners, and virtues" (Zachs, *The Making of a Syrian Identity*, 71). See also *Nafir Suriyya* 11 (April 22, 1861). There are numerous discussions of this term in the journal *al-Jinan* (vol. 3, no. 6 [1872]: 201–4; vol. 2, no. 13 [1871]: 447–52).

173 *Nafir Suriyya* 5 (November 1, 1860): "Should you not revive that old amiability and roll up your sleeves to face these problems, compensate for the damage, and work together for the good of this land, knowing that you are not enemies but friends?" (TA)

174 Bustani did not specify a particular confession. His conception of religion appeared to be universal; a true religion was one that supported the rules of a civil society and remained loyal to God.

175 *Nafir Suriyya* 11 (April 22, 1861). (TA)

family.”<sup>176</sup> Brotherhood and justice were paramount for creating a shared national identity. People had to learn that they were united by faith, and they could not seek vengeance on an entire group if certain individuals within that group committed a crime.<sup>177</sup> Finally, Bustani argued on behalf of a secular state, in which religious and political authority were clearly separated: “For religion is inherently concerned with inner or personal matters, unchanged through time and place, while politics is concerned with external matters, changeable through time and place.”<sup>178</sup>

The eleven pamphlets were not only read in Ottoman Syria, but also in Egypt, Greece, Iraq, along the Bosphorus, as well as in Persian-speaking territories.<sup>179</sup> *Nafir Suriyya* was not a call for readers to orient themselves entirely towards Western secular civilization. Rather, Bustani wanted them to take a more critical look at Europe and themselves. Although Europe was more civilized than the Levant, “most of its civilized people seek their own interest more than the development of their people in terms of knowledge and manners.”<sup>180</sup> Outwardly adopting a European habitus was not enough to build a civil society in a different cultural context.<sup>181</sup>

Although we think that it is useful and rational to learn from others and that most of the benefits of civilization are the product of the West and that most Europeans deserve utmost respect, we cannot assert that every product is useful in itself and fit for the success of people of the East and for their environment. . .<sup>182</sup>

For Bustani, self-determination and resistance against foreign control were principles worth emulating. Once again, it was evident that he had been formatively influenced by the missionaries’ world of thought, but he did not embrace their ideas uncritically. Bustani explicitly called upon his fellow Syrians to assume the sense of responsibility – without regard to hierarchy or religious fanaticism – that the Syria Mission had denied to its native helpers.<sup>183</sup> What the missionaries saw as part of the inferior and flawed mentality of the Arabs, Bustani was able to transform into positive self-criticism.<sup>184</sup> The Americans did, however, always treat the Ottoman gov-

176 Ibid. (TA)

177 *Nafir Suriyya* 7 (November 19, 1860).

178 *Nafir Suriyya* 10 (February 23, 1861). (TA)

179 Sarruf and Nimr, “al-Marhum al-Mu’allim Butrus al-Bustani,” 3.

180 *Nafir Suriyya* 11 (April 22, 1861). (TA)

181 Ibid.: “Since every strange and new thing becomes popular and since we are living in the age of Europe and European taste and habits are overshadowing those of the East, we fear that most of the people of our land, who are among the most to be drawn to imitation, might settle for imitating European habits, clothing, and traits, thinking that this is enough to be considered civilized and superior to the rest of their people, oblivious to the fact that such an imitation distances them from their own people and turns them into unworthy imitators in the eyes of foreigners.” (TA)

182 Ibid. (TA)

183 Makdasi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 198.

184 *Nafir Suriyya* 5 (November 1, 1860): “O sons of the fatherland, what excuse for our acts could we give the foreigners but being stupid and uncivilized and allowing our emotions to take precedence over our mind? Their taking place under extraordinary circumstances might be accepted as an excuse. What can be expected from a land whose people are formed of clans with different origins, mentalities, goals, and interests? Most of them do not care about the common good of this region and a good number does not consider it to be their fatherland.” (TA)

ernment and its local administrators with respect. According to Jessup, it was the task of every missionary to “steer clear of all these rational and sectarian political jealousies and try to teach loyalty to the ‘power that be,’ the common brotherhood of man, and offer to all a common saviour.”<sup>185</sup> Parallels to ideas in *Nafir Suriyya* are readily apparent.

Bustani was steadfastly loyal to the Ottoman government. Nearly all of his publications after 1859 included a message of thanks to the sultan and other members of the government.<sup>186</sup> “He was obviously seeking official favour and patronage,” TIBAWI has noted.<sup>187</sup> In light of the censorship requirements that were problematic for the missionaries as well, Bustani’s gesture appears to have been a helpful one. For his publications, Bustani depended not only upon the permission of the responsible authorities, but also their financial support. The *Da’irat al-Ma’arif*<sup>188</sup>—*Encyclopédie arabe*, which he published between 1875 and 1882, depended upon the financial assistance of the Egyptian khedive Isma’il, as Bustani had enjoyed a wide following in Egypt since *Nafir Suriyya*.<sup>189</sup> Isma’il ensured that hundreds of copies of the lexicon were sold in Egypt, and he also supplied its editor with reference works from Bulaaq.<sup>190</sup> Stricter censorship of the press under the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909) resulted in a ban on the import of encyclopedias with articles that criticized the Ottoman government. As a consequence, encyclopedias were frequently brought into the country with pages cut out.<sup>191</sup> With his project, Bustani sought to build bridges in both a social and political sense. His encyclopedia was intended for the broadest possible reading public<sup>192</sup> (*kitāb ‘umūmī li-kull al-milal*

See also Shaw, “Butrus al-Bustani and the American Missionaries,” 76–77: Bustani fully agreed with the missionaries’ assessment of Syria’s cultural deterioration (*inhiṭāt*), applying this criticism to his own message in *Nafir Suriyya*.

185 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 593.

186 See, for example, his 1859 speech *Khutba fi Adab al-‘Arab* (appendix I). See also Tibawi, “The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani,” 166; and *Nafir Suriyya* 2 (October 8, 1860): “Sultan ‘Abd al-Majid ... in the firman he issued ... ordering to take all measures to eradicate corruption, put an end to these events, and restore security, also demonstrates that he considers this matter to be of utmost importance and that he cares for the good of his people and sympathizes with them.” (TA) See also Tibawi, “The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani,” 170: Bustani ended his 1862 grammar book *Kitab Miftah al-Misbah* (appendix I) with the words: “the Caliphate of His Majesty of the two seas, Sultan ‘Abdul-‘Aziz ... May God establish his state with glory and prosperity, and perpetuate his power and victory.”

187 Tibawi, “The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani,” 166.

188 The full title is *Kitab Da’irat al-Ma’arif wa Huwa Qamus ‘Ilm li-kull Fann wa Matlab* (The Circle of Knowledge, a Lexicon of Knowledge about every Art and Cause). For more on the encyclopedia, see Glaß, “Butrus al-Bustani (1819–1883).”

189 Sarruf and Nimr, “al-Marhum al-Mu’allim Butrus al-Bustani,” 3.

190 Tibawi, “The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani,” 179.

191 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 434.

192 *Ibid.*, 484: Five hundred copies were ordered by the Egyptian viceroy. Additional orders went to Syrian pashas, patriarchs, bishops, priests, school directors, muftis, sheiks, traders, farmers, teachers, students, monks, foreign missionaries in India and Syria, as well as to scholars from Germany, France, England, and America.

*wa l-madhāhib*, a book for all classes and confessions)<sup>193</sup>, and it attempted to draw evenly upon Western and Arab sources for the main subject areas of the modern natural sciences, technology, as well as European and Arab history and literature.<sup>194</sup> Henry Harris Jessup praised the work enthusiastically:

It is a compilation and translation of the best French, English, and American encyclopedias, and the geographical and historical parts are enriched from the best works of the most eminent Arabic authors. The illustrations were furnished by Messrs. Appleton and Co.<sup>195</sup> of New York and the book as far as printed is a monument of industry and literary ability.<sup>196</sup>

In researching local cultural and religious history, Bustani personally contacted well-known individuals to obtain biographical information about patriarchs and priests, and to ensure that his articles were as accurate as possible.<sup>197</sup> Before his death in 1883, Bustani – with the assistance of nearly all of his family members – was able to complete six of twelve planned volumes.<sup>198</sup> A seventh volume was half-finished.<sup>199</sup> According to Jessup, drafts for the other volumes were nearly complete.<sup>200</sup> Bustani’s son Salim published only one additional volume before he died in 1884. Bustani’s younger sons Nasib and Najib oversaw the encyclopedia through the publication of its eleventh volume (1900), ending with the Arabic letter *‘ayn*, the eighteenth of twenty-eight consonants.<sup>201</sup>

In contrast to European encyclopedias, the coverage of Arab poets and Islamic thinkers, and also local geography, was much more comprehensive. See Hourani, “Die Enzyklopädie von Butrus al-Bustani,” 212.

193 As described in the foreword to *Da’rat al-Ma’arif* 1, 4, cited in: Glaß, “Butrus al-Bustani (1819–1883),” 125.

194 Tibawi, “The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani,” 180; Hourani, “Die Enzyklopädie von Butrus al-Bustani,” 210. Bustani was one of the first Arabic-speaking authors to depict the United States and its residents in a factual way. See Makdisi, *Faith Mispaced*, 55–56: “Bustani’s description of the United States was schematic, but his precise enumeration of the country’s population represented the beginnings of a modern Arab understanding of America.”

195 Hourani, “Die Enzyklopädie von Butrus al-Bustani,” 210: The illustrations in the first three volumes were done by a local artist named Mikha’il Farah.

196 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 485.

197 Bustani to the Maronite metropolitan Yusuf al-Marid (January 18, 1883): AA.6.1/Butrus al-Bustani. (TA)

198 Hourani, “Die Enzyklopädie von Butrus al-Bustani,” 210.

199 N. N., “al-Asif al-‘Azim” (Great Sorrow), *al-Nashra al-Ushbu’iyya* 19 (May 7, 1883).

200 Jessup, “Muallim Butrus el-Bistany,” 276. In the aforementioned letter to the metropolitan Yusuf al-Marid in early 1883, Bustani wrote that he would soon come to the letter “M,” the fifth to last letter in the Arabic alphabet. See Bustani to Yusuf al-Marid (January 18, 1883): AA.6.1/Butrus al-Bustani. (TA)

201 Hourani, “Die Enzyklopädie von Butrus al-Bustani,” 204: Because of censorship, the last two volumes were published in Cairo. “The last article covered the Ottoman dynasty, which was perhaps appropriate, since the ever greater obstacles to publishing freely within the sovereign territory of Sultan Abdülhamid, along with financial difficulties, had led to the long delays in moving the enterprise from Beirut to Cairo.”

According to Claude Boustany Hajjar, a descendant of the Bustani family, the encyclopedia continued to be written within the family.

### 5. In support of women's education and cultural progress: Bustani and the literary circles

Given the diversity of Bustani's initiatives throughout Beirut's intellectual scene, one might ask how he also participated actively in the establishment of various literary and intellectual societies.<sup>202</sup> In 1883, *al-Muqtataf* wrote that the achievements of this one person were almost unconceivable; one scholar even called him "the giant" (*al-jabbār*).<sup>203</sup> As already depicted, his first attempt to establish a group focused on knowledge and scholarship was the *Majma'at al-Tahdhib* (Society for Education), founded in 'Abeih in 1846.<sup>204</sup> It reorganized soon thereafter as *Al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun* (Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences). Four of the speeches that he delivered at its meetings have been preserved: (1.) *Khitab fi Ta'alim al-Nisa'* (A Discourse on the Instruction of Women),<sup>205</sup> (2.) *Fi Madina Beyrut* (On the City of Beirut),<sup>206</sup> (3.) *Amali Falkiyya* (Astronomical Observations),<sup>207</sup> (4.) *Al-Hariri* ([On the Arabic Poet] al-Hariri)<sup>208</sup>. The last three were purely informative lectures, typical of the wide-ranging themes that were addressed at the society's meetings. Bustani's speech on the education of women, which he delivered on December 14, 1849, continues to attract attention today. In his cultural environment, this idea was new. The *Muqtataf* later wrote that Bustani was the first person in the East to address the topic of women's education in a speech ("wa kân awwal min khuṭub fî l-sharq bi-hādhā l-bāb").<sup>209</sup> The maxim at the end of this speech ("She who rocks the cradle with her right hand moves the world with her arm")<sup>210</sup> later became a mantra of Syrian intellectuals.<sup>211</sup>

202 Bustani founded or participated in numerous literary and scientific societies: *Majma'at al-Tahdhib* (Society for Education, 1846–47); *al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun* (Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences, 1847–52); *al-Jam'iyyat al-'Ilmiyya al-Suriyya* (Syrian Scientific Society, 1857–60 und 1867–69); *al-'Umda al-Adabiyya li Ishhar al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya* (Literary Support for Disseminating Arabic Books, 1860–?); *Jam'iyyat Beyrut al-Ingiliyya* (Beirut Bible Society, 1862–?); *Jam'iyyat Zahrat al-Adab* (Flower of Arts Society, 1873–?); *al-Majma' al-'Ilmi al-Sharqi* (Oriental Scientific Association, 1882–ca. 1885).

203 Sarruf and Nimr, "al-Marhum al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustani," 4.

204 See chapter I, section 2.4.

205 Khuri, *Al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 45–53. A partial English translation is available in Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs*, 159–62. The speech was reprinted with minor changes in Bustani's journal *al-Jinan* in 1876. See Lindner, "Rahil 'Ata al-Bustani," 63.

206 Khuri, *Al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 71–72: This is an overview of Beirut's history and important personalities in the ancient and early medieval era.

207 Glaß, *Der Muqtataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 126: The lecture introduces the sun (*shams*), Venus (*zuhra*), Mars (*mirriḳh*), Jupiter (*mushtarī*), Saturn (*zuḩal*), Uranus (*ūrānūs*), the earth (*arḩ*), and the moon (*qamar*).

208 Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 77–78.

209 Sarruf and Nimr, "al-Marhum al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustani," 6.

210 "An allatī tahazzu al-sarīr bi-yamīnīhā hiya allatī taḩarraku al-maskūna bi-dhirā'ahā." See Bustani, "Khitab fi Ta'alim al-Nisa'," in: Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 53, translated and cited in Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs*, 162.

211 Zachs, "Feminism for Men," 124. In *The Women of the Arabs* (p. 195), Jessup cites an article by "Frances Effendi Merrash" in *al-Jinan* (September 1, 1872) that invokes Bustani's quote:

Women's education was, however, no longer revolutionary in the Arab world of that time; churches had sponsored girls' schools in Syria since the seventeenth century. As already described, the education of Syrian girls was an essential part of the American missionaries' evangelism.<sup>212</sup> Bustani's wife Rahil, whom he married in 1843, had herself been well educated by the missionaries. Bustani moved in a social milieu where schooling for women was assumed. It is not surprising that three of Bustani's daughters were professionally active as writers or authors.<sup>213</sup>

As a critique of those who believed that women's education was not essential, Bustani began his speech – as he himself put it – with “barbarian” peoples, namely Indians and Native Americans. MAKDISI has shown that this classification of peoples corresponded to the missionaries' worldview. According to Bustani, people of the Arab world occupied a middle position between barbarian nations and the civilized societies of the Western world. “But for Bustani, such descriptions were literary devices to help clarify an Arab predicament, not discourses rooted in the experience and practice of racial discrimination and domination,”<sup>214</sup> MAKDISI concludes. Although the situation for women in Syria was better than in India, where women were expected to engage in heavy labor in the place of their husbands, they “have not yet reached the level of knowledge and civilization (*al-ma'arifa wa l-tamaddun*) that would be necessary for the country's success and the progress of its people.”<sup>215</sup> Bustani interpreted the role of a woman Biblically, as God had made her the mother of creation (“*al-mawlan ... aqāmahā ummam li-l-khalīqa*”). Her physical nature was not suited for engaging in heavy labor. A woman's duty was to raise the next generation with the knowledge and values that she herself had acquired through education. The ideal of the “Republican Mother,” as described in chapter I, section 1.2, is clearly evident.<sup>216</sup> A new generation that might help in the project of nation building depended first upon the proper religious and educational upbringing at home.<sup>217</sup> Thus, women had to be able to read and write, and also demonstrate proficiency in religion,

“Woman is the one fountain from which is derived the life of man in its earliest periods. ... Have you not heard that she who rocks the cradle, moves the world?”

212 See chapter I, section 1.2.

213 Zachs, “Feminism for Men,” 128–29: Adelaide (Idlid) published her novella “Hinri wa Imilya” (Henri and Emilia) in Bustani's journal *al-Jinan* 1, no. 12 and 13 (1883–84); Sarah worked as a secretary for an older lady; and Alice published her novel *Riwayat Sa'iba* (A Novel of Sa'iba) in 1891.

214 Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 207. Indeed, Bustani does not address these issues anywhere.

215 Bustani, “Khitab fi Ta'alim al-Nisa',” in: Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 47.

216 See also Lindsay, *Nineteenth Century American Schools in the Levant*, 126: “Bustani's paper is also a correct summary of the purposes which the missionaries held in 1850 toward female education. There was no thought of the current concept of self-actualization for women, no idea of educating them equally with men, no idea of professional or career training, but only the positive goal of training girls to become mothers who could offer an enlightening influence upon the children, complementing that of the educated fathers.”

217 “Because the woman uses all of her knowledge, education, and civilization for her children. ... At this point, the child's empty heart is filled with her soft friendliness and everything she has that is good, corresponding to her tastes.” See Bustani, “Khitab fi Ta'alim al-Nisa',” in: Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 51.

pedagogy, history, geography, needlework, and other household activities.<sup>218</sup> These subjects, which were taught in the missionary girls' schools, essentially established motherhood as a professional field.<sup>219</sup> Bustani may have been the first Middle Eastern scholar to address the topic of women's education,<sup>220</sup> but the connections between his own views and those of the missionaries were unmistakable.

In 1859, the American Mission Press published Bustani's very thorough *Speech on Arab Culture (Khutba fi Adab al-'Arab)*, which he presumably delivered before the *Jam'iyat al-'Ilmiyya al-Suriyya* (Syrian Scientific Society, 1857–1860, 1867–1869)<sup>221</sup> on February 15, 1859.<sup>222</sup> In its emphasis that knowledge and the sciences were essential to a society's development, the speech closely resembled lectures given by Smith, Van Dyck, and Wortabet at the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences. In a historical overview of the periods before and after the introduction of Islam, Bustani emphasized the outstanding scientific achievements of the Abbasids. Works from the Abbasid era had been read and preserved by Europeans. The reprinting of these works in European centers of Arabic book printing, as Smith mentioned in his annual speech of 1852,<sup>223</sup> encouraged new readers of classical Arabic literature. With respect to the Arabic language, Bustani's speech shared key ideas with Van Dyck's "On the Delights and Utilities of Science": Bustani and Van Dyck both emphasized that, because of years of neglect, classical Arabic texts could no longer be understood by generally educated readers without the help of specialized dictionaries.<sup>224</sup> Integrating foreign terms into Arabic was a sensible means of compensating for deficiencies ("*al-iqtisār mā lā wujid lahu fī aṣl tilka l-lughā*"), Bustani argued.<sup>225</sup> In the exchange with other cultures, the Arabic linguistic heritage could be preserved only if it was not neglected in favor of European languages.<sup>226</sup> Finally, he advised the "sons of the nation" not only to treasure Arab cultural achievements of the past, but also to recognize the advantages that contact with "civilized peoples" (*bi-shu'ūb mutamaddina*) had brought. Essays, speeches, and debates on literature, religion, politics, and the education of women would lead to a more progressive society.<sup>227</sup>

218 Bustani, "Khitab fi Ta'alim al-Nisa'," in: Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 49–50.

219 MH 46 (1850), cited in: ROS 4, 107; Zachs, "Feminism for Men," 125.

220 Qasim Amin's 1899 work *Tahrir al-Mar'a* (The Liberation of Woman) invoked Bustani's ideas and developed them further, promoting a new conception of women's role in society. See Zachs, "Feminism for Men," 129.

221 On the two periods of activity, see chapter I, section 2.4. In *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity* (19), Sheehi refers to the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences. This is not correct, however, since at this point the society no longer existed.

222 A thorough analysis can be found in Jandora, "Buṭrus al-Bustānī," 37–62.

223 E. Smith, "Khutba al-Ra'is al-Sanawiyya Sana 1852" (Annual Speech of the President for 1852), in: Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 25.

224 Van Dyck, "Fi Ladhat al-'Ilm wa Fawa'idihī," in: Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 31.

225 Bustani, *Khutba fi Adab al-'Arab*, 20.

226 *Ibid.*, 19.

227 Bustani made similar remarks about the positive influences of Western cultures in his 1869 speech *Khitab fi l-Hay'a al-Ijtima'iyya wa l-Muqabala beyn al-'Awa'id al-'Arabiyya wa l-In-*

There was a social dimension to the knowledge that foreign and indigenous media presented to Arab society. Knowledge was the *sine qua non* of cultural success.<sup>228</sup> Bustani disrupted the essential connection between education and Protestantism, as embodied by the missionaries. Instead, education became a cultural rallying point for the “sons of the nation.” Only through progress and civilization could the mistakes of the past be overcome.

Thus, Bustani’s outward distancing from the Syria Mission at the end of the 1850s was accompanied by changes in his conception of culture and the future of the Arab nation. The missionaries no longer played a leading role; at most, they could be useful helpers alongside other Europeans. In his speech, Bustani notably reserved his highest praise for the Egyptian press in Bulaaq, in operation since 1821 – and not for the American Mission Press, where he had worked for nearly two decades. The Egyptian press was distinguished by its excellent organization (*hassan niẓām*) and its great accomplishments (*‘aẓam fā’idatihā*) in printing original texts and translations.<sup>229</sup>

## 6. Final observations

YUSUF QASM KHURI called the revised edition of his 1976 dissertation *Rajul al-Sabiq li-‘Asrihi*—“A Man Ahead of His Time.”<sup>230</sup> Was Bustani, with his many accomplishments, really ahead of his time? Bustani’s pioneering achievements – including the first modern Arabic dictionary, the first Arabic-language encyclopedia, and successful secular Arabic periodicals – clearly demonstrate his outstanding position in the Syrian *nahḍa* of the nineteenth century. As depicted in this chapter, his projects were inspired by personal interactions as well as historical events. Under no circumstances did Bustani regret his cooperation with the American missionaries, even if their paths hardly crossed in the later years of his life. Bustani was a passionate advocate and supporter of cultural exchange. The Americans offered forms of assistance that could only benefit the Syrian people. As he wrote in the fourth pamphlet of *Nafir Suriyya*: “We seize this opportunity to thank our brothers on the other side of our sea and beyond the Atlantic Ocean as well as their sons, who are guests in our fatherland, for the continuous assistance they provide us with.”<sup>231</sup>

Bustani lived in a generation of political, social, and cultural upheaval. In his work, he reacted to the emerging possibilities but also the losses associated with this upheaval. From this perspective, he was not ahead of his time, but instead “a quintessential product of his time,” as MAKDISI has aptly stated.<sup>232</sup> As one of several charismatic figures who reshaped Syria’s cultural life, he should not be portrayed

*franjiyya* (A Speech on the Similarities and Contrasts between Arab and Western Customs). See Jandora, “Buṭrus al-Bustānī,” 63–70.

228 Sheehi, *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity*, 34.

229 Bustani, *Khutba fi Adab al-‘Arab*, 35.

230 Khuri, *Rajul al-Sabiq li-‘Asrihi*.

231 *Nafir Suriyya* 4 (October 25, 1860). (TA)

232 Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 181.

as an exceptional character, but rather as “an exemplary liberal product of the comingling of American and Arab histories that legitimated new identities, allowed for new histories, and made possible new, and often contradictory, conceptions of the modern world.”<sup>233</sup>

Bustani repeatedly called upon the sons of the nation to advance their own culture. His call was premised upon engagement with other cultures, which was essential for critical self-reflection.<sup>234</sup> This kind of reflection on the positive effects of cultural engagement, a common feature of Bustani’s writings and speeches, could not be taken for granted in the Ottoman Empire of the late nineteenth century, where Western influence was increasingly perceived as a threat. On the other hand, he criticized Syrians’ affinity for foreign languages as merely a trend. In his writings, he demonstrated that a culture could advance only through the mastery of its native language.<sup>235</sup>

Through the decisions that Bustani made over the course of his life, it is evident that he followed his own conscience and convictions, independent of others.<sup>236</sup> Despite the religious tradition in which he was raised, he decided to adopt the Protestant faith.<sup>237</sup> Once he could no longer cooperate with the mission without sacrificing his independence and self-reliance, he turned to new goals, dedicating himself to the ideas of Syrian patriotism, cultural awakening, and liberal reform.<sup>238</sup> In addition to pursuing a “strategy of sameness” (as described in this chapter’s introduction) that encouraged native helpers to see themselves as the missionaries’ equals, Bustani also pursued a “strategy of difference.” As described by HENNINGSEN, “aboriginality” was used to differentiate between natives and foreign missionaries, particularly in conflict situations.<sup>239</sup> For Bustani, the Arab homeland (*waṭan al-‘arabī*) – by the end of the nineteenth century, increasingly identified as the “Arab nation” – was the key to establishing an independent identity in a globalizing world. Regardless of religious background, the Arab people spoke a common language and had a common cultural heritage, as Bustani depicted in his 1859 speech.<sup>240</sup>

The circle of his admirers within and outside Syria was great, as demonstrated by the numerous remembrances of the departed Mu‘allim al-Bustani that appeared in Arabic journals and newspapers in 1883.<sup>241</sup> The missionaries – above all, Eli

233 Ibid., 215.

234 Ibid., 213.

235 Bustani, “al-Madrasa al-Wataniyya,” 626.

236 Sarruf and Nimr wrote that Bustani was prepared to surmount any obstacle, and that he was never ashamed of his actions. (“al-Marhum al-Mu‘allim Butrus al-Bustani,” 4)

237 Hourani, “Die Enzyklopädie von Butrus al-Bustani,” 207.

238 Shaw, “Butrus al-Bustani and the American Missionaries,” 88.

239 Henningsen, “On Difference, Sameness and Double Binds,” 145.

240 On *abnā’ al-‘arab* (sons of the Arabs), see Jandora, “Butrus al-Bustānī,” 96: “Al-Bustānī introduced that term as a necessary consequence of endeavor to redirect loyalties.”

241 In 1883, eulogies for Bustani filled the newspapers. The journalist and author Adīb Ishāq lavished praise on the departed Bustani in his speech at the funeral: “What literary work do we see, and you are not the originator or proponent of it? What beneficial enterprise do we witness, and you are not the initiator or supporter of it? ... What effect of your continuous pioneering endeavor do we mention and not find it great? Is it your persistence in the service of knowledge

Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck – were among his friends and supporters. Even the religious conservative Henry Harris Jessup, not known for his cultural sensitivity, frequently sought the company of the Syrian scholar.<sup>242</sup> Until the end of his life, Bustani remained one of the most influential men in the Syrian Protestant community, although not everyone welcomed his self-confidence and stubbornness in asserting his opinion, as he himself admitted in 1854. The precise nature of the disagreements between Bustani (as representative of the native congregation) and the mission remain unknown. Daniel Bliss commented on these in 1873.<sup>243</sup> In Bliss's eyes, Bustani was a "bad, bold man – a stumbling block," who was not nearly as well liked as earlier in his career.<sup>244</sup> Even the editors of Bliss's *Letters from a New Campus* (1993) have been persuaded that Van Dyck, too, broke off his friendship with the successful (and, according to Bliss, insufferable<sup>245</sup>) scholar in the final years before his death. Jessup recounted that Van Dyck could not say anything more than "Oh, friend of my youth!"<sup>246</sup> at Bustani's funeral. The editors RUGH und HOWELL have interpreted Van Dyck's words as follows:

1883<sup>247</sup> was, after all, the year of the Darwin incident when Van Dyck resigned from S. P. C. Van Dyck therefore had chosen this way of gratifying the sensibilities of the Arabs, and all Bustani-worshippers, while side-stepping the morally distasteful necessity of delivering an insincere eulogy for one toward whom he indeed had had most cordial regards in his youth, but which he no longer held.<sup>248</sup>

This statement is erroneous in two respects. First, Van Dyck's relationship with the mission, and particularly with the SPC, was far from harmonious at that time. It seems unlikely that he would take the side of the mission in harboring resentments against Bustani. Moreover, Jessup presumably intended to convey the emotion of

and culture for forty years or more? Or your compositions and literary works, which by their renown need no description?" From *Da'irat al-Ma'arif* 7 (1883), 594–96, translated and cited by Jandora, "Butrus al-Bustānī," 79. See also Salim Bustani, "Butrus al-Bustani," in: *al-Jinan* 14 (1883), 321; Sarruf and Nimr, "al-Marhum al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustani," in: *al-Muqtataf* 8, no. 1 (1883), 1–7.

242 As Bliss wrote to his wife Abby (August 10, 1873 and March 18, 1874), cited in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 46 and 227. In the same year that Bustani (according to Bliss) was supposed to have made many enemies because of his behavior, Jessup wrote: "There is not a more industrious man in Syria than Mr. Bistany, and he is doing a great work in the enlightenment of his countrymen." See Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs*, 136.

243 Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (August 10, 1873), in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 46.

244 Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (March 16, 1874), in: *ibid.*, 225. The Arab journalists and authors Sarruf, Nimr, and Zaydan describe an entirely different Bustani – generous, upstanding, mild-mannered, and peace-loving. He opposed any kind of flattery. He supported talented students, entrusting them with important tasks. According to Sarruf and Nimr ("al-Marhum al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustani," 5) failure was his greatest fear. See also Zaydan, *Tarikh Adab al-Lughā al-'Arabīyya, al-Juz' al-Rabi'*, 29.

245 In a letter to his wife Abby from August 10, 1873, Daniel Bliss mentioned the "selfishness, pride and excessive vanity of Butros" (*Letters from a New Campus*, 46).

246 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 106.

247 The year alone points to poor research. The affair concerning Professor Lewis occurred in 1882 (see chapter I, section 1.5).

248 Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 240 (no. 36).

the moment to his readers when he wrote that Van Dyck uttered only these few words. In fact, at the funeral service, which was conducted by the missionaries, Van Dyck made a short speech that clearly expressed his true feelings:<sup>249</sup>

It is not right that I stand here before you today and speak, since this site<sup>250</sup> is so close to me. . . Now I am standing in your midst and crying bitterly. My brother, my dear friend, who was taken from us – more than this, he was my master, my teacher, my friend! How many nights did we spend together studying, reading, and writing? It was a beautiful time together, since we shared the same goals and plans. How I can stand by his body and speak, instead of kneeling at his side in mourning and sorrow?<sup>251</sup>

Only a few weeks later, on May 25, 1883, Van Dyck opened the annual meeting of the *Majma' al-Ilmi al-Sharqi* with words of remembrance for Bustani, who had also been a member of the society. Van Dyck suggested that Bustani's path to success had been marked by many obstacles. His tireless activism and struggle against forces of resistance (“*al-zurūf al-mudādda*”) had taken a toll on his health. Nevertheless, he was a remarkable role model for future generations.<sup>252</sup> The unnamed author who praised the departed scholar in the mission journal *al-Nashra al-Usubu'iyya* agreed.<sup>253</sup> In his speech, Van Dyck added that Bustani had earned his place among the prominent figures in *The Secret of Success (Sirr al-Najah)*,<sup>254</sup> which Ya'qub Sarruf had translated and published in 1880. He left behind a large community of those who loved their homeland (“*fa-tarak jumhūran kabīran min muḥabbī al-waṭan*”) and greatly regretted this loss.<sup>255</sup>

Like Bustani's conception of an Arab homeland, his popularity was far-reaching. After his death, his son received condolences from the Catholic patriarch of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. Bustani – first a Maronite, then a Protestant – had nonetheless become a friend and brother: “The whole nation mourns your father's death. Literature, education, learning, and every good cause laments his departure . . .”<sup>256</sup>

The Syrian intellectual remains well known today, both within the Lebanese Protestant community as well as among scholars of history and Arab studies. He is mentioned in numerous (particularly Arabic-language) works, although many of the conflicts discussed in this chapter cannot be thoroughly investigated because

249 Jessup, “Muallim Butrus el-Bistany,” 276. Bustani was not, however, mentioned in the records of the Anglo-American church among those who had died in 1883. See “Report of the Pastor's Committee of the Anglo-American Congregation, Beyrout for the year 1883,” in: AAC Records (1868–1891), 242; NEST/SC.

250 The church.

251 Zaydan, *Tarajim Mashahir al-Sharq fi l-Qarn at-Tasi' Ashar*, 29–30: The same article also contains a eulogy by the journalist and author Adib Ashaq (ibid., 30–31). In the seventh volume of the *Da'irat al-Ma'arif* from 1883, Salim al-Bustani compiled numerous eulogies and death announcements for his father. Ibid., 589–608.

252 Van Dyck, “al-Khutba al-Sanawiyya,” 641.

253 N. N., “al-Asif al-'Azim” (Great Sorrow), *al-Nashra al-Usubu'iyya* 19 (May 7, 1883): 149.

254 Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu'assasun li l-Jami'a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 211.

255 Van Dyck, “al-Khutba al-Sanawiyya,” 641.

256 Cited in Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 484–85.

of lost or untraceable sources. The biography of Mu'allim al-Bustani will have to remain incomplete.

### III.2. "HE WAS TRULY THE CHILD OF THE MISSION"<sup>257</sup>: REV. JOHN WORTABET, M.D. (1827–1908)

#### 1. Biographical overview

John Wortabet is the son of the Armenian Jacob Gregory Wortabet (1798–1833), who converted to the Protestant faith, and Susan (the English form of Sardas) Wortabet, who later taught at the girls' school established by the missionaries in Beirut in 1834.<sup>258</sup> John (the English form of Yuhanna) was born in Sidon in 1827, where his father worked as a preacher for the Syria Mission. Because he died early,<sup>259</sup> John and his siblings received their primary schooling from the American missionaries. Thereafter, John studied ancient languages, theology, and medicine with the Americans for eight more years.<sup>260</sup> After receiving additional medical training in Scotland, in 1860 he applied to the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland as a missionary and doctor. He was sent to Aleppo for six years to missionize the Jews. After acquiring further medical experience in England and the United States between 1866 and 1867, he was hired as a professor of anatomy and physiology by the SPC in 1867.<sup>261</sup> He left the college in 1886, but he continued to lecture there occasionally and also practiced medicine privately.<sup>262</sup> After suffering from laryngeal disease, Wortabet died in Beirut on November 21, 1908, at the age of 81. He was survived by his wife Salome and their ten children.<sup>263</sup> He is buried in the Anglo-American Cemetery in Beirut. (Figure 10)

257 Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 132.

258 MH 31 (1835), in: ROS 2, 420.

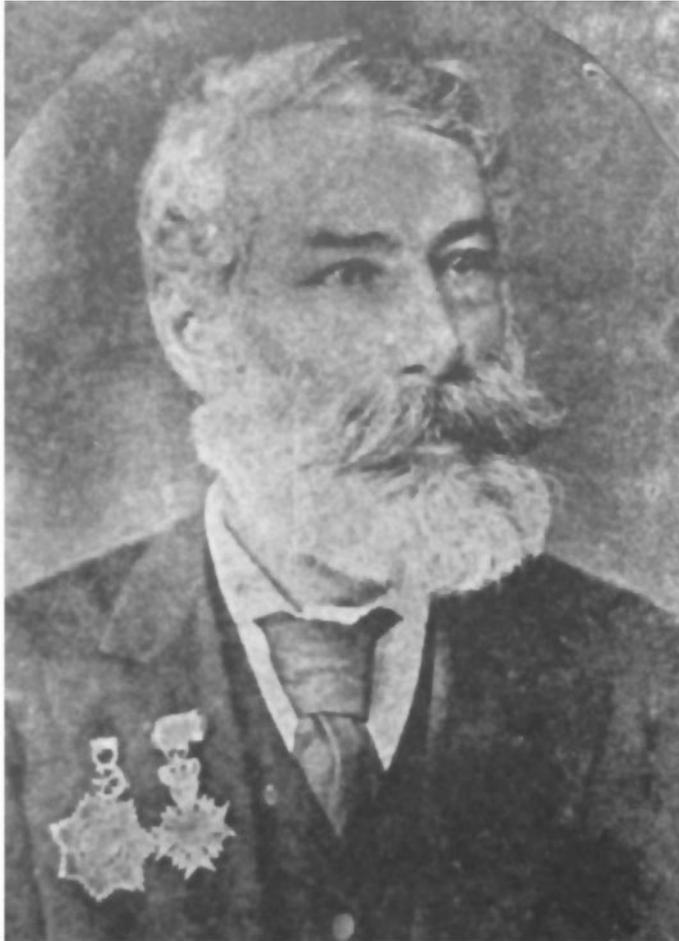
259 MH 29 (1833), in: ROS 2, 336–39.

260 Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 377; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 132.

261 Y. Sarruf, "Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat, 1829–1908," *al-Muqtataf* 30 (1905) and 34 (1909), cited in Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu'assasun li l-Jami'a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 183.

262 D. S., "Biography – Rev. John Wortabet," 4.

263 Sophie Gräff to Bertha Kuhr (Beirut, December 12, 1908): AFKSK AKD 243. The children's names were Henry George Luther (1853–?, born in Hasbeiya, also taught at the SPC in 1871/72); Erwin Whiting (1856, born in Hasbeiya); William Thomson (1855–?, born in Hasbeiya); Elda Ralur (1862–?, born in Aleppo); James Rashid (1864–?, born in Aleppo, completed degrees in medicine and surgery in 1891); Mathilda Dora (1867–?); Susan Mary (1871), Lucy Macarthy (1875–1948); Pauline?; and Jessie Eliza. See Zaydan, "al-Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat," 427; Lindner, "Syrian Protestant Families"; University of Glasgow, The University of Glasgow Story, accessed June 2013, <http://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/biography/?id=WH17766&type=P&o=&start=1020&max=20&l=w>.



*Figure 10: Rev. John Wortabet, M.D.*

## 2. A child of the mission?

Because of his excellent education, Yuhanna – or John, as the Americans called him – became a good missionary and a very successful doctor. Nevertheless, his biography was shaped by problems that had to do with his position within the Syria Mission. It is therefore important to explore why Wortabet, who played a key role within the mission, ultimately distanced himself from the American missionaries.

John Wortabet was the son of the former Armenian cleric Jacob Gregory Wortabet,<sup>264</sup> one of the mission's first converts and helpers. This circumstance had a formative influence on John's youth. Jacob Gregory was orphaned at a young age,

<sup>264</sup> The Armenian spelling of his name, Hagop Krikor Vartabed, does not appear in mission sources.

and he followed his father's wishes that he become a "Wurtabad," a cleric "similar to Rabbi among the Jews or D.D. in England and America."<sup>265</sup> He even became the bishop's deputy in his church district in Jerusalem. During the many years that he spent in an Armenian Orthodox monastery, he witnessed how members of the order, bishops, and even the patriarch of Jerusalem hid women and boys in their chambers. These "satanic" acts shattered his faith in his church, and his protests against them ultimately led to his suspension from the order. Together with other Armenian clerics, he travelled to the region around Beirut. From this point forward, he wrote his name as "Wortabet." He met the missionary William Goodell in Beirut in 1825, and Goodell hired him as a secretary "to copy Turkish-Armenian Tracts, and to arrange all the Turkish words in alphabetical order for a dictionary."<sup>266</sup> The encounter did not lead immediately to Wortabet's conversion. Only after extensive Biblical study did he come to believe that the Americans were in accordance with the Holy Scripture in word and deed.<sup>267</sup> He was then certain that they were God's angels, sent "from America as from heaven" to missionize in this location, which had fallen "under the dominion of satan," as he himself had witnessed in the monastery. As an expelled priest, Jacob Gregory was wholly dependent on the missionaries' assistance: "We had not been able to obtain the comfort for our life in these countries had not Mr. Goodell do alms for us."<sup>268</sup> In the years that followed, Jacob Gregory Wortabet developed a close and friendly relationship with the Americans. Eli Smith even lived with Wortabet, his wife Susan,<sup>269</sup> and their children for six months.<sup>270</sup> The missionaries foresaw great success in working with a man of such conscience and integrity.

It is not too much to say that there is not another individual in Syria, so well qualified in all respects for the work of preaching the gospel to the people of various languages and religions. ... His perfect knowledge of the Turkish and Armenian languages gave him ready access to numbers with whom we can hold little or no communication.<sup>271</sup>

When political instability caused by the Greek revolts threatened to endanger the missionaries in Beirut, they retreated to Malta between 1829 and 1830. Dionysios Carabet and Jacob Wortabet accompanied the Americans, bringing along their families as well. Because of an eye ailment, Wortabet returned to Beirut already in 1829 or 1830, as his son Gregory later wrote. Tensions must have arisen, because Wortabet and Carabet withdrew their membership from the mission church in Octo-

265 "A brief memoir of Gregory Wortabet": ABC 16.6.3., 1.

266 *Ibid.*, 26. Excerpts from these memoirs were printed in MH 24 (1828), in: ROS 2, 44–51.

267 "A brief memoir of Gregory Wortabet": ABC 16.6.3., 27–28.

268 Gregory Wortabet to Jeremiah Everts (Beirut, January 31, 1828): ABC 16.6.3. (231).

269 Jacob Gregory Wortabet married Susan (or Sardas, as she is called in some mission sources) in 1825. See MH 24 (1828), in: ROS 2, 50. Susan was the daughter of the mission's native helper Nicola Lafluti. See MH 23 (1827), in: ROS 1, 471; Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 191; and Lindner, "Syrian Protestant Families." See appendix II, no. 71.

270 MH 32 (1836), in: ROS 3, 6: This presumably occurred in the period between 1827 and 1829, when Smith was studying in Egypt and Syria. During this period he also stayed with the family of Tannus al-Haddad for several months (see chapter II, section 1.2).

271 MH 29 (1833), in: ROS 2, 338.

ber 1829. According to church records, one of them even baptized his own child.<sup>272</sup> Despite Wortabet's friendly relationship with the missionaries and his support for Goodell's translation work, he did not receive a proper income from the missionaries, with the exception of donations in the first several years. Jacob Wortabet remained an unpaid native helper, although on the occasion of his death in 1832 the mission recalled him as a "very promising ally of the mission in Syria."<sup>273</sup>

After returning from Malta, Jacob Wortabet began missionizing on his own in Beirut.<sup>274</sup> It was likely another eye ailment that "reduced him to poverty."<sup>275</sup> The Wortabets and their children moved to Sidon, where the missionary William Bird visited them in 1831, finding "him and his wife destitute of the good things of this life, but contented and cheerful."<sup>276</sup> John Wortabet's father could, however, quickly improve his young family's living conditions. As an independent missionary, he became a respected figure in the area around Sidon. Since he spoke fluent Armenian, Turkish, and Arabic, he was able to communicate with those whom the American missionaries had difficulty reaching in the early years of the Syria Mission.<sup>277</sup> In order to provide for himself and his family, Jacob Gregory Wortabet opened a small shop in Sidon, and he soon became a successful businessman. He contracted cholera and died suddenly in September 1832, leaving behind a wife and four children, the last of whom (a girl named Hanni) was born only after his death.<sup>278</sup>

Because of the outstanding accomplishments of their "faithful brother and fellow-laborer"<sup>279</sup> Jacob Wortabet, it can only be assumed that the missionaries felt responsible for looking after his widow and four children. The missionaries knew that, as a convert, Susan Wortabet could not rely on the support of her community.<sup>280</sup> One year after Jacob Wortabet's death, Susan was working in the Beirut

272 "Records of the Missionary Church at Beirut, meeting (in Malta) of October 20th, 1828": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8, cited in: Badr, "Mission to 'Nominal Christians,'" 109; Copeland, *Sesquicentennial History of the Community Church of Beirut*, 6.

273 MH 29 (1833), in: ROS 2, 336. Jacob Wortabet's son Gregory later emphasized that his father did not receive any kind of a pension from the American missionaries, nor was he paid for his services to the Syria Mission: Wortabet, *Syria and the Syrians*, vol. 1, 56–57.

274 Wortabet, *Syria and the Syrians*, vol. 1, 56.

275 Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 226.

276 Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 226. Gregory Wortabet reported that his father followed the advice of friends and moved to Sidon because of the great opposition he encountered in Beirut (*Syria and the Syrians*, vol. 1, 56).

277 Whiting and Bird to Anderson (Beirut, January 1833): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 01 (4).

278 The *Missionary Herald* wrote that Susan had three children only once. See MH 29 (1833), in: ROS 2, 334. Other sources refer to four children. See MH 31 (1835), in: ROS 2, 420; MH 32 (1836), in: ROS 3, 7; Wolcott to Anderson (June 1, 1842): ABC 16.5, Vol. 3.

The children were John, Gregory, Ya'qub, and their sister Hanni. Van Dyck mentioned a Henry Wortabet who also attended the boys' seminary ("Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission," 12), although it is not clear who this is. Zaydan and the minutes of the ABCFM mentioned the brothers John, Gregory, and Ya'qub (or Jacob). See "Records of the Syria Mission 1842" (August 11, 1842): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1., 105; Zaydan, "al-Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat," 425.

279 MH 29 (1833), in: ROS 2, 339.

280 *Ibid.*, 334: "Wortabet's widow is now left entirely without any temporal resources whatever. Her relations have long considered and treated her as a perfect alien, because she had left their communion, and there is reason to suppose they will not be kinder now."

girls' school as an assistant to the missionary wives Mrs. Dodge and Mrs. Smith ("We have much complacency in her as a Christian sister").<sup>281</sup> The mission also instituted a "Wortabet Children's Fund," although the source of its donations is not clear.<sup>282</sup> Beginning in 1836, money from this fund was used to support the education of nine-year-old John Wortabet and his brothers Gregory (in Armenian: Krikur) and Ya'qub at the American boys' school in Beirut.<sup>283</sup> In 1843, the remaining money in the fund was paid out to the children's guardians.<sup>284</sup> The missionaries hoped that Gregory would be taken in by a mission family, and that Ya'qub would pursue a practical career, but they wanted to invest in John's continued education.<sup>285</sup> The missionary Thomson reported that twenty-six dollars was spent on new clothing for the boy.<sup>286</sup> Ya'qub Sarruf, who later studied with John Wortabet at the SPC, wrote in 1905 that his teacher had learned English so thoroughly at the Beirut mission seminary that he could be mistaken for a native speaker.<sup>287</sup> Despite the closing of the Beirut seminary in 1842, the mission nonetheless hoped that John Wortabet would soon follow in his father's footsteps.<sup>288</sup> For the next eight years, the missionaries instructed him privately. He learned theology, Hebrew, and Greek from Smith, Whiting, and Thomson; Van Dyck and De Forest taught him medicine and Latin.<sup>289</sup> John's brother Gregory did not see a future with the mission; he left Syria in the early 1850s to study medicine in England.<sup>290</sup>

John Wortabet was among the few converts who could be trusted, as Samuel Wolcott wrote in 1842: "I name him ... as an exemplary lad of whom we have considerable hope."<sup>291</sup> In 1847, he was formally accepted into the congregation of the Mission Church (later called the Anglo-American Congregation), where he

281 MH 31 (1835), in: ROS 2, 420.

282 "Records of the Syrian Mission" (March 20, 1843): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1., 111.

283 Gregory Wortabet later recalled this time fondly: "the goodly Hebard and his wife looking down from its [the mission house's] terrace on their children, as they called us. ... But I will not weary the reader with the associations of my early life, the days of my sweet childhood" (*Syria and the Syrians*, 70).

284 "Records of the Syrian Mission" (March 25, 1843): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1., 115.

285 "Records of the Syrian Mission 1842" (August 11, 1842): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1., 105.

286 Thomson to n. n. (Beirut, December 30, 1835), cited in: Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 83.

287 Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 132; Y. Sarruf, "Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat, 1829–1908," *al-Muqtataf* 30 (1905), cited in Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu'assasun li l-Jami'a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 183.

288 William M. Thomson in "The Committee in the results of the Seminary submit[s] the following report" (April 6, 1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (23).

289 Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 377; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 132.

290 Zaydan, "al-Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat," 427. See the introduction to chapter II and appendix II, no. 66.

291 Wolcott to Anderson (June 1, 1842): ABC 16.5, Vol. 3. In this letter, Wolcott had nothing good to say about nearly every other native member of the congregation. He was known within the mission for his highly critical attitude. Wolcott never learned Arabic himself, and he asked to be transferred from Syria after his wife's death: Van Dyck, "Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission," 17.

remained active until his death.<sup>292</sup> William Thomson, who in later years continued to advocate on Wortabet's behalf (see below), wrote during this period: "He is a promising young man, and we hope to see him a preacher of the gospel before a long time shall have elapsed. ... We hope he may be ready to accompany any new missionaries to Aleppo, or wherever a new mission shall be established."<sup>293</sup>

In 1848, Wortabet was sent to Aleppo with the missionaries Benton and Ford, where they spent six to eight months working to build a permanent mission station.<sup>294</sup> Expectations were high, but the Aleppo congregations lost members instead of attracting new ones: "We have quite a spiritual death at present."<sup>295</sup> Although Smith had recently persuaded him otherwise, Wortabet continued to harbor doubts about his calling. He wrote to his teacher and mentor: "It is evident, however, that the work is too gigantic for one like me, in point of competency and physical ability to meet its duties. ... I have fallen short of every duty."

Under Smith's direction, Wortabet continued his study of theology in Aleppo.<sup>296</sup> During the few months of his stay, he worked through the three volumes of Mosheim's church history ("I have finished Mosheims Eccl[esiastical] Hist[ory] some days ago"), studied Greek and Hebrew, received instruction from his colleague Ford in Biblical exegesis, and also studied logic ("it must be a good discipline to the mind").<sup>297</sup> Notably, Wortabet (who grew up speaking Arabic) also used his time in Aleppo to acquire a deeper understanding of his mother tongue. His tutor "Sheikh Akeel" assigned him the Koran and texts about prophecy and Mohammed, and also taught him about poetry.<sup>298</sup> The young missionary wanted to learn more about specialized theological terminology and Arabic rhetoric: "I do not know what to study. It seems to me that my Arabic studies, at present, should be such as to give me an additional stock of words, especially of theological technical terms. ... What do you think I had better study?"<sup>299</sup>

Wortabet's experience shows that Nasif al-Yaziji's and Bustani's eloquence in the Arabic language did not always come naturally to Syrian Protestant theologians. It is clear why the mission wanted Arabic to be the language of instruction at the mission seminary in 'Abeih. In order to practice his Arabic preaching, Wor-

292 MH 43 (1847), in: ROS 4, 28; "Report read at the Annual Meeting held in the Memorial Hall" (February 9, 1894), in: AAC minutes (1881–1905), 42; NEST/SC.

Because of his pastoral work in Hasbeiya, he became a member of the native Beirut Church from around 1850 to 1859.

293 MH 43 (1847), in: ROS 4, 25.

294 Ibid.; Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 369. Elyas Fawaz was supposed to go to Aleppo instead of Wortabet, but Fawaz declined. See "Records of the Syrian Mission 1848": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1., 185.

295 Wortabet to Smith (Aleppo, August 30, 1848): ABC 60 (98), (HHL).

296 "I have received your favor of the 4th ... & am much obliged for the instruction it contains." See Wortabet to Smith (Aleppo, July 24, 1848): ABC 60 (98), (HHL).

297 Wortabet to Smith (Aleppo, October 3, 1848) und (Aleppo, November 9, 1848): ABC 60 (98), (HHL).

298 Wortabet kept interrupting these lessons because he lacked time and money, and he also questioned the competence of Sheikh Akeel. See Wortabet to Smith (Aleppo, August 11, 1848) and (Aleppo, August 31, 1848): ABC 60 (98), (HHL).

299 Wortabet to Smith (Aleppo, October 3, 1848): ABC 60 (98), (HHL).

tabet even translated his own English sermons. He sought to improve his reading comprehension and speaking style by reading Arabic texts.<sup>300</sup> Wortabet regularly sent his mentor Smith different texts that he found interesting, presumably to help expand the mission library in Beirut. These included the copy of a manuscript by Naum al-Khuri (“Essahâ Mualakat”),<sup>301</sup> as well as copies of Muslim epitaphs that Wortabet himself had prepared.<sup>302</sup> Wortabet criticized the stylistic deficiencies of a new Arabic translation of a five-volume work by “Antoine” on Roman Catholic theology, but he nonetheless recommended the volumes as a helpful reference.<sup>303</sup>

After his stay in Aleppo, Wortabet presumably spent the winter months between 1848 and 1849 studying in ‘Abeih, as he wrote in a letter from Aleppo on August 30.<sup>304</sup> In the following year, Wortabet seems to have interrupted his studies. He moved to Tripoli so that he could earn money as a doctor, in addition to working as a mission helper. Although he still wanted to study theology and help with the mission, the thought of being ordained seemed to retreat into the distant future.<sup>305</sup> However, Smith remained convinced of Wortabet’s abilities and was able to change his mind. In the summer of 1850, the young doctor returned to the mission. Thomson, however, was not so confident. He argued that until Wortabet’s “heart and soul” could get back to “where it was in relation to the preaching of the Gospel,” Wortabet should not be entrusted with any responsibility.<sup>306</sup> In the following months, Wortabet remained undecided about continuing to work as a preacher,<sup>307</sup> although he eventually overcame his uncertainty. In 1851, he was called to the Sidon (Saida) region in southern Syria, together with William Thomson, Cornelius Van Dyck, and Tannus al-Haddad. “Wortabet seized hold of this mighty truth with amazing earnestness,” William Thomson wrote that same year.<sup>308</sup> In Hasbeiya, southeast of Sidon, a church was to be established with a native pastor – a wish of Rufus Anderson’s since 1848.<sup>309</sup> A congregation was formed with eighteen members on July 5, 1851; by the end of the year, there were twenty-five members.<sup>310</sup> The small town had attracted the attention of the Syria Mission since 1844, when a group of fifty or sixty residents had turned to the Protestant faith and initiated contact with the Americans.<sup>311</sup>

The trip south brought Wortabet back to the region where he had grown up. The missionaries attributed the population’s steadily growing interest in the new

300 Wortabet to Smith (Aleppo, August 11, 1848): *ibid.*

301 Wortabet to Smith (Aleppo, June 21, 1848): *ibid.*

302 Wortabet to Smith (Aleppo, October 3, 1848): *ibid.*

303 Wortabet to Smith (Aleppo, November 9, 1848): *ibid.* Neither Mosheim’s church history, nor al-Khuri’s or Antoine’s work appear in the catalog of the American press. See PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*.

304 Wortabet to Smith (Aleppo, August 30, 1848): ABC 60 (98), (HHL).

305 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, June 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (199).

306 Thomson to Anderson (‘Aytat, August 2, 1859): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (254).

307 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, June 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (199).

308 Thomson to Anderson (Hasbeiya, October 9, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (257).

309 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, May 27, 1848): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1.

310 “Report of the Hasbeiyan Station for 1851”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (164).

311 See, for example, MH 40 (1844), in: ROS 3, 391–92.

religion to the work of Wortabet's father: "For many years there have been in Sidon cases of interest, mostly traceable to the self-denying labors of the pious and zealous [Jacob] Gregory Wortabet."<sup>312</sup> Van Dyck and Thomson were highly satisfied with Wortabet's mission work, and they were particularly impressed by his skills as a preacher:

It is surprising how he runs every line to his glorious centre, from whatever point in the circumference of theology he may set out. No sooner do our friends hear of an inquirer than they visit him; and those short missionary tours often result in far more than was anticipated.<sup>313</sup>

Wortabet's work as a preacher, teacher, and doctor earned him great respect within the congregation. In their letters, Van Dyck and Thomson repeatedly emphasized their hopes that this promising young man would soon become an ordained pastor.<sup>314</sup> The words of praise are not surprising, since at this time Wortabet was the only candidate whom the Americans would consider for pastoral office. Already in 1849, one year after the founding of the native church in Beirut, both John Wortabet and Mikha'il 'Araman had been considered as potential pastors, but the missionaries did not think that they had had sufficient training.<sup>315</sup> So that Wortabet might eventually become pastor in Hasbeiya, Thomson, Smith, and Whiting planned first to send him back to Beirut, so that he could resume his studies there. Van Dyck responded in protest: "When working men are wanted, how long shall the only one we now have be kept at study?"<sup>316</sup> Apparently, Van Dyck was only partially successful in persuading the others to change their minds. Wortabet's ordination was delayed further, presumably so that he could continue his studies while working in Hasbeiya.<sup>317</sup> It seems surprising that Wortabet deferred to these decisions, given his initial doubts about the office of pastor. It is even more astonishing that on March 27, 1853, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Syria Mission in Beirut, John Wortabet was ordained not as a "native pastor," but rather as an "evangelist."<sup>318</sup> After years of theological study, Wortabet was called to proclaim the Gospel – but not to a higher church office. This outcome seemed disproportional to the efforts expended on his examination by the missionaries Eli Smith, William Thomson, Cornelius Van Dyck, Simeon Calhoun, William Benton, George Whiting and H. Bood. After examinations in Hebrew, Greek, and various theological subjects,

312 MH 47 (1851), in: ROS 4, 146–47.

313 MH 48 (1852), in: ROS 4, 157. Anderson deemed that, in this regard, Wortabet had inherited his father's talents (*History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 377).

314 MH 49, 1853, in: ROS 4, 188.

315 Badr, "Mission to 'Nominal Christians,'" 291 and 294. Bustani, Fawaz, and Haddad had been considered for this position since the beginning of 1844. See Anderson, "Memorandum of my visit to the Levant": ABC 30.10., Vol. 3, 38 (HHL). In 1850, Van Dyck reported that Elyas Yaqub could be a candidate for pastoral office in Hasbeiya. He wanted to establish a church there with two others from Hasbeiya. See Van Dyck to Anderson ('Abeih, October 21, 1850): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5.

316 Van Dyck to Anderson ('Abeih, October 21, 1850): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5.

317 The Hasbeiya station's annual reports indicate that Wortabet began work there in 1851. See ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (164 and 165).

318 William M. Thomson delivered the sermon during the ordination service, and it was printed by the American Mission Press. See Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, 770.

followed by Wortabet's sermon on 1 Corinthians 2:2, the committee concluded: "This examination of Mr. Wortabet is highly satisfactory and ... we [will] proceed to his ordination ... at the Mission chapel."<sup>319</sup> An evangelist or preacher would typically travel widely in order to evangelize the population. But Wortabet remained in Hasbeiya, since there was a longstanding expectation that he would help to build the congregation there. He fulfilled the duties of a native ordained pastor, and was identified as such by the missionaries,<sup>320</sup> but officially he was only a preacher. Nevertheless, Wortabet once again demonstrated that his competencies exceeded the missionaries' expectations. The young congregation and its preacher were tested by the volatile political situation in Hasbeiya and its surroundings at the end of 1851, as well the bitter animosities between the Greek Orthodox and Catholic churches. Because there was no chapel, the congregation met in Wortabet's home.<sup>321</sup> The congregation grew slowly, and some members were suspended. Thomson wrote admiringly of Wortabet:

[He] continued his labours in Hasbeiya and vicinity during all these troubles. And this experience of his courage and ability to sustain himself in times of perplexity and alarm will enable the mission to commit the church in Hasbeiya to his care with the greater confidence.<sup>322</sup>

Anderson praised Wortabet's independent initiative: "When there was a call for discipline, it was carried through firmly and wisely, without assistance from the mission."<sup>323</sup>

In January 1853, Wortabet married Salome Carabet, daughter of the Armenian bishop Dionysios Carabet, who converted in 1827 and worked with John's father for the missionary William Goodell.<sup>324</sup> Salome Carabet (later Wortabet) was likewise a foster child of the mission. She and her younger sister Melita,<sup>325</sup> as well as John's sister Hanni (also Hannie or Hanne) came to the Whiting family<sup>326</sup> at the age of five or six, along with the daughters of the Armenian convert Yakob Gregory,

319 Thomson and Whiting to Anderson (Beirut, April 18, 1853): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4 (34).

320 MH 49 (1853), in: ROS 4, 188; Smith to Anderson (Beirut, October 19, 1855): ABC 60 (105), (HHL): "J. Wortabet ... our first native pastor"; "Hasbeiya (Station Report for the year 1855)" by Thomson and Van Dyck (Sidon, January 1, 1856): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (170): "Mr. Wortabet, the pastor of the church at Hasbeiya."

321 "Report of the Hasbeiya station for the year 1853": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (167).

322 "Report of the Hasbeiya station for the year 1852": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (165). The following year Thomson noted: "[S]ince our excellent young brother has proved entirely competent to fulfill the duties of his important station, and throughout all the dangers and trials of a very disturbed and critical year has maintained his position with courage, and presents his labours with unabated zeal." See "Report of the Hasbeiya station for the year 1853": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (167).

323 Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 377.

324 MH 23 (1827), in: ROS 1, 425–26, 469.

325 Melita Carabet (1832–1902) later worked in the girls' school directed by Hanni Wortabet in Hasbeiya. When the Kaiserswerth deaconesses took up their work in Beirut in 1860, as a "native teacher" Melita assumed an important intermediary role between the deaconesses and native students. After her death she left her small savings to the German girls' school in Beirut. See J. Hauser, C.B. Lindner, and E. Möller, introduction to *Entangled Education*, 11; and Hauser, *German Religious Women in Late Ottoman Beirut*, 109–12.

326 Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs*, 54 and 64.

Rufka and Sada.<sup>327</sup> The missionary wife Matilda Whiting, who did not have children herself, raised the girls according to Protestant principles. They first helped at the Whitings' school in Jerusalem, later following the Whitings to 'Abeih, where Mrs. Whiting directed a girls' school. Salome and Hanni also taught at this school. Even before her marriage to John, Salome worked as a mission helper in Mosul. When John was finally sent as a preacher to Hasbeiya, his fiancée Salome and his sister Hanni assumed the leadership of a school there.<sup>328</sup>

The few reports and notes about Wortabet in the *Missionary Herald*, and in the private correspondence of missionaries to the secretary Rufus Anderson, indicate that there was initially nothing out of the ordinary to report about the Syrian pastor in Hasbeiya. Wortabet was conscientious and pious, and he conformed with the views of his mentors – at least at first. Even Van Dyck, who had taught Wortabet in medicine and worked with him for many years in southern Syria, wrote little about the young theologian in his correspondence with Anderson between 1851 and 1858. An exception was the 1857 disagreement between Wortabet and the Maronite bishop Butrus, a relative of Butrus al-Bustani. The bishop came to Hasbeiya in order to debate Wortabet about religion, intending to use his arguments to force Wortabet out. Instead, the bishop suffered a bitter defeat. An emir supposedly whispered to Wortabet that he ought not be too hard on the bishop. The Maronite departed early, but in order to save face he spread a rumor that Wortabet had fled.<sup>329</sup>

Wortabet was stationed in Hasbeiya alone, but (with one exception<sup>330</sup>) the ABCFM did not collect his annual reports because it did not employ him directly. Although Wortabet had a good relationship with Van Dyck and Thomson and corresponded with them regularly, they rarely mentioned Wortabet's letters to the ABCFM.<sup>331</sup>

Having completed his training with the Americans, Wortabet was the only Syrian to be officially ordained as an evangelist, with the responsibilities of an ordained pastor. This was, however, no guarantee that he and the Americans would relate to one another as equals. Gregory Wortabet, who visited his brother John in Hasbeiya around 1854, aptly noted what would become a problem for Wortabet in the years to come: "I could tell no difference between this congregation and a New England one, except it was in the dress and language, and the earnestness of the minister."<sup>332</sup>

327 Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 236–37 and 273: The Whiting family took in both girls after their parents died in 1836.

328 Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs*, 63–66. They followed in the footsteps of Rahil 'Ata (Bustani's wife), who had taught among the Protestants in Hasbeiya since 1844. See Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 178.

329 Van Dyck to Anderson (Sidon, April 23, 1857): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (343).

330 "An. Report Hasbeiya for 1858. Rec'd. Feb 25 1859": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (173).

331 An 1853 report quoted a short excerpt from Wortabet's station report. In 1855, Thomson cited almost the entire report: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (167 und 170).

332 Wortabet, *Syria and the Syrians*, vol. 1, 271.

### 3. Distancing from the ABCFM

In the spring of 1860, John Wortabet ended his working relationship with the Syria Mission, applying instead to work as a missionary for the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland (UPC). What happened?

In 1855, just two years after his ordination, Wortabet contacted Dr. Coldstream, secretary of the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society. The young pastor had the feeling that he needed additional training for his work as a doctor, which he had continued while also serving as pastor. He believed his medical knowledge was incomplete. Wortabet was convinced that a stay in Scotland would make him a better missionary: “[M]y motives in this step are ... a sincere desire of improvements, with the object of becoming better qualified to labor for the spiritual and physical good of my countrymen.”<sup>333</sup>

Wortabet did not turn to the American Board with his request for additional training, as this would have violated its principles. The American Board did not support the education of natives in the United States, because the potential for cultural alienation could disqualify them from serving in their homeland. Wortabet emphasized to Coldstream that the ABCFM could not determine his future ambitions. “As I endeavour however, to act in this matter as a conscientious Christian, and from a strong sense of duty, I do not feel myself bound by the principles and rules of the Board.”<sup>334</sup> Because Coldstream understood that it would be impossible to support Wortabet without first discussing the matter with the missionaries in Syria, he turned to Cuthbert G. Young, who had corresponded directly with Smith about the Lebanon Schools.<sup>335</sup> Young was to ask Smith what had motivated Wortabet’s desire to travel to Scotland. Coldstream told Young that – with the agreement of the ABCFM – the Edinburgh missionary society could support Wortabet’s studies, but not his family. Young, too, believed that Wortabet could become an even more valuable colleague with one or two years of additional training. This would not have to affect his readiness to continue working for the Americans. Nevertheless, the ABCFM and the missionaries in Syria (in whose name Smith responded) feared losing their only ordained native preacher because of this trip. William Thomson certainly played in role in the response to Wortabet’s “‘uncontrolled’ desire to visit Scotland for some time.” According to Smith, Thomson hoped that Wortabet would not find the financial means that would allow him to travel. Smith attempted to shift responsibility for the matter elsewhere: “Can you not set the matter right in England?”<sup>336</sup> Smith’s request apparently had an effect, as Wortabet’s wish to go to Scotland initially remained unfulfilled.

In April 1858, Van Dyck briefly remarked to Rufus Anderson that Wortabet was leaving Hasbeiya: “We are about to lose Mr. Wortabet. This we regret much:

333 Cuthbert G. Young, secretary of the Free Church of Scotland (which supported missions in the Ottoman Empire), included Wortabet’s letter to Dr. Coldstream (Hasbeiya, July 4, 1855) in his own letter to Eli Smith: Young to Smith (London, September 12, 1855): ABC 60 (99), (HHL).

334 Ibid.

335 For more on the Salibi brothers’ Lebanon Schools, see chapter I, section 2.3.

336 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, October 19, 1855): ABC 60 (105), (HHL).

but perhaps the Lord designs to do his work by the most feeble instruments, that more glory may occur to his own Holy Name.”<sup>337</sup> He elaborated further in another letter written in August of that same year. Wortabet had visited him and said that he would not leave his congregation in Hasbeiya as long as the mission could not guarantee support for the native church. He would only travel to Scotland after this matter had been resolved.

It appears as if Wortabet’s decision was not entirely unwelcome to the ABCFM. Similar to the situation with Bustani, who again applied to be pastor of the Beirut church in 1854, voices within the mission argued that longstanding theological differences had become unacceptable.<sup>338</sup> In 1858, when Wortabet submitted his first personally written annual report for Hasbeiya, William W. Eddy (stationed in Sidon since 1858) added this note before forwarding the report to the ABCFM: “Send this as it is, yet I doubt the justness of some [of] his inferences and should regret to have it published [for] American Christians.”<sup>339</sup> Eddy’s note had to do with Wortabet’s comments in the annual report about a Greek Orthodox Christian who had embraced the Protestant faith, but returned to his home church before his death. Wortabet openly stated his hope “that [the] knowledge [of Jesus Christ] is attended with the sanctifying form of the Holy Spirit – even where the subjects of this change continue out of the pale of Protestantism and of the Protestant church.”<sup>340</sup> He believed that the departed man should not be excluded from the fellowship of salvation, even if he had not left his church (“who on earth is competent to shut him out for that reason ...?”). Although Wortabet was following the American mission’s original intention, to reform the churches of the Levant from the inside out, this no longer seemed relevant to Syria Mission – least of all, to William Eddy. In his note to Wortabet’s annual report, Eddy further commented that American Christians could not be told “that there [are] as good Christians in the Greek church as in those that have separated from it. A true Christian would not stay and could not be [?] in the Greek church nor in any other of the nominally Christian churches.”<sup>341</sup>

It would seem that here the Protestant religion’s claim to truth was extended to the point of absurdity. Theological differences of opinion were not, however, the only reason why Eddy argued to accommodate Wortabet’s wish to travel to Scotland in early 1859. Wortabet had submitted his travel request in the spring of 1858, but he had received no financial support or response from the mission. He was deeply disappointed at having to postpone his plans again. Eddy believed that Wortabet’s halfhearted engagement was no longer helpful to the mission, and that the mission had committed three grave mistakes in its dealings with him – namely, “in giving him the kind of education he has, in giving him so unusually large a

337 Van Dyck to Anderson (Beirut, April 15, 1858): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (346).

338 Already in 1851 Smith had reported that “he had, for example, difficulties about inspiration, and he would not see that infants ought to be baptized.” See Smith to Anderson (Beirut, June 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (199).

339 “An. Report Hasbeiya for 1858. Rec’d. Feb 25 1859”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (173).

340 Ibid.

341 Ibid.

salary, 1000 piastres a month,<sup>342</sup> and Mr Ford adds a third mistake in his being left to act so independently in Hasbeiya. I hope we shall avoid these mistakes in our future dealings with native helpers.”<sup>343</sup>

Rufus Anderson, who had held out such hope for Wortabet,<sup>344</sup> likewise expressed his disappointment:

From the account given of Mr. Wortabet I incline to the opinion that it will be advantageous to the mission and the cause to be rid of him and his great salary. I have not been able to recover the confidence I lost in his integrity in 1855 by his conversing with a whole hour or more as if he were intent on his work at Hasbayya, when, as it afterwards appeared, he was then fully resolved on going to Edinburgh to perfect himself as a physician!<sup>345</sup>

Similar events in India led Anderson to conclude: “There is, however, one good result from these cases; we see that the native intellect is susceptible of high culture and development.” In the end, the outcome was sobering. The independence that Wortabet had sought as pastor in Hasbeiya led the mission – and Anderson, as well – to conclude that native Protestants ought not be entrusted with too much responsibility. Van Dyck’s brief commentary on these events (“Our experiment of a native pastor has proved a failure”)<sup>346</sup> leaves many questions unanswered; his position on the matter is not clear.

The deeper problem confronting Wortabet in Syria was not lost on Anderson. The missionaries described Wortabet’s motivations as a “kind of restlessness in being in a subordinate position, and under the supervision of the missionaries,”<sup>347</sup> but Anderson also asked what might have happened if Wortabet had “really and fully” been installed as pastor in Hasbeiya. What might have happened “if he and the church had then been distinctly informed, that the responsibility of self-government was thence forward to devolve upon them; saving only that accountability to the Mission ...?”<sup>348</sup> Although Eddy warned that Wortabet had been given too much responsibility, Wortabet did not see himself as fully independent and free to make his own decisions.

Wortabet eventually spoke out on this matter himself, in his well-known *Researches into the Religions of Syria* (see below). In his chapter on Protestantism in Syria, he addressed the problems that foreign missionaries and native converts

342 By contrast, the native helper Daher ‘Abud, who was also being considered for pastoral office, received just 250 piasters a month. See Eddy to Anderson (Sidon, January 8, 1859): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.2. (434).

343 “An. Report Hasbeiya for 1858. Rec’d. Feb 25 1859”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (173).

344 “I hope much from the example of Wortabet, & pray that he may prove himself at Hasbeiya a good soldier of the Lord Jesus.” See Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, November 6, 1851): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 15 (HHL).

345 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, February 23, 1859): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 25 (HHL). William M. Thomson also believed that Wortabet was making a mistake, but he did not lose all confidence in the native pastor: “I do not abandon the hope that he may yet do a good service for the cause of Christ in Syria. He is a good man, and an able preacher.” See Thomson to Anderson (‘Abeih, July 12, 1859): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (319).

346 Eddy to Anderson (Sidon, January 8, 1859): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.2. (434).

347 Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, June 8, 1860): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 26 (HHL).

348 Ibid.

encountered at length. Without directly mentioning the American Board, the association was clear. He spoke of an exaggerated need for discipline, which he had experienced himself. This discouraged the growth of native congregations, disillusioning hopeful protagonists:

In churches of modern growth particularly, the benefit of discipline is of the utmost importance; and for this reason, among others, that it is absolutely necessary to the proper and healthy development of the Church itself. . . . But . . . there is a danger, into which some are very apt to fall, of carrying this matter to an injurious extreme. We do not believe that a rigid and uncharitable system of surveillance is either more scriptural or more successful in preserving the purity of the Church, than a lax watchfulness over its interests. For while the latter policy often receives children of the world who will bring into the Church a worldly spirit with all its baneful effects, the former rejects weak but sincere Christians, induces many to put on the cloak of hypocrisy, and fosters a spirit of self-righteousness, which is so abominable in the sight of God, and so destructive of all Christian efforts in the promulgation of the true religion.<sup>349</sup>

Through his own experiences with the American Board and its missionaries, Wortabet had witnessed the kind of “piety which adds to a long face and morose manners a harshness in judging of others.” This involved condemning all those who held differing opinions in “minor points of theology,” as well as those who did not always want follow the missionaries unconditionally.<sup>350</sup> Wortabet distanced himself from that group of Christian missionaries whom he felt acted as Pharisees (“Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou”). Severity and misanthropy overshadowed love for one’s neighbor, with “the evils of this spirit” driving away new, inexperienced Christians.<sup>351</sup> He could see a path to success only through the agency of native Protestants. Like Luther in Germany, Zwingli in Switzerland, and Knox in Scotland, it was Syrian Protestants who were “qualified to labour to the best advantage . . . in the land of their birth and education.”<sup>352</sup> The freedom of missionaries and native congregations was a top priority for Wortabet, as for Cornelius Van Dyck and William Thomson. The Syrian of Armenian heritage concluded:

The moral strength of converts to Protestantism . . . cannot be promoted to that degree of solidity . . . unless they have an important share in the evangelisation of their country and a respectable position in the ranks of the ministry of the Gospel. They must feel . . . a freedom from anything like a system of suspicious *surveillance*.<sup>353</sup>

While young and inexperienced congregations were still in their “infantile stage,” they did need the missionaries’ watchfulness, “which, however, to be right and useful, must be paternal in its spirit, flowing from, and manifested by genuine love.”<sup>354</sup> Wortabet and the missionaries did not have a falling out; it was later written “that he parted with the Society on the most friendly terms.”<sup>355</sup>

349 Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 382.

350 *Ibid.*, 383.

351 *Ibid.*, 383–84.

352 *Ibid.*, 391–92.

353 *Ibid.*, 393.

354 *Ibid.*, 394.

355 UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (April 3, 1860), 232.

He left Syria in 1859, traveling to Glasgow and Edinburgh to study medicine. As the Syria Mission had refused to provide any financial support for this undertaking,<sup>356</sup> Wortabet presumably received assistance in Scotland. However, the specifics of his arrangement are unknown, including whether he was accompanied by his wife Salome and their children. In April 1860, Wortabet submitted his application to the UPC along with two letters of recommendation (from Dr. Hanna, pastor with the Free Church of Scotland, and from businessman John Henderson).<sup>357</sup> Wortabet was ready to work for the UPC as a pastor and doctor. His application outlined his biographical and professional experience. He explained the end of his working relationship with the ABCFM, pointing on one hand to his long-held desire to visit Great Britain, and on the other hand, to the “peculiar relation, implying missionary supervision, in which the native ordained minister stood to the missionaries of the Board.”<sup>358</sup> He could envision working for the UPC only under the following two conditions:

1st That he be equal to a European Colleague in standing and office, there being no supervision of one over the other, and 2nd that he be equal with him in the matter of salary, being sensitive to this point as he considers that inferiority of salary implies inferiority of position or of qualification on the score of nationality, but at the same time that he would not make perfect equality of stipend a necessary or indispensable condition.<sup>359</sup>

Although the 1860 Liverpool missionary conference had maintained that native colleagues were to keep their distance, both socially and materially, from Western missionaries (“since to do otherwise would seriously diminish their effectiveness”),<sup>360</sup> the UPC agreed to Wortabet’s request. Wortabet had to join the UPC, and he was assigned to work with the missionary R. Grant Brown in missionizing the Jews in Aleppo. The UPC granted him the usual salary of £200, with the potential for more if needed.<sup>361</sup> There were immediate objections from Boston. Rufus Anderson, who was clearly watching Wortabet’s situation, communicated with the UPC secretary Andrew Somerville,<sup>362</sup>

describing minutely the policy of the Board with regard to native agents. – and expressing a fear that if the native agents trained in the Mission and ordained as Pastors, shall by coming to England, Scotland or America, be accepted by other Protestant Societies and have given to them the standing and salary of Missionaries, this procedure will have a very inferious effect upon their large expensive and highly promising Mission among the Armenians in Turkey, as it will tend to induce the native Agents to leave their service or to make them discontented with their position and with the amount of support which the Board think it right to give them. ...<sup>363</sup>

356 Eddy to Anderson (Sidon, January 8, 1859): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.2. (434).

357 UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (May 1, 1860), 234. Michael Marten also describes Wortabet’s collaboration with the UPC (*Attempting to Bring the Gospel Home*, 49–51).

358 UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (April 3, 1860), 232.

359 UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (May 1, 1860), 234.

360 Bonk, *The Theory and Practice of Missionary Identification*, 38.

361 UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (May 1, 1860), 235.

362 In 1860, Anderson wrote to the Syria Mission that he was corresponding with Dr. Somerville. See Anderson to the Syria Mission (Boston, June 8, 1860): ABC 2.1.1., Vol. 26 (HHL).

363 UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (July 3, 1860), 253. See also Anderson’s letter to Somerville (Boston, around June 1860), held in the Presbyterian Historical Society archive in Philadelphia, PA (RG

Somerville responded that the UPC would not be intervening at all in areas served by the mission, since Wortabet was being sent to Aleppo, where there was no American mission station.<sup>364</sup> On July 30, 1860, Anderson responded that “we anticipate no interference with our Mission.”<sup>365</sup> No further obstacles remained for Wortabet’s work in Aleppo. However, his plans to travel to Aleppo by way of Beirut and Hasbeiya were thwarted by the civil war that had broken out in Syria a few months earlier. Wortabet had to remain in Beirut, and as a doctor, he felt obliged to help the Americans in caring for the wounded.<sup>366</sup> He also presided over Arabic worship services for the mission.<sup>367</sup> In a letter to the UPC, he requested permission to use medicine that he had acquired in Edinburgh with Scottish mission funds in Beirut.<sup>368</sup> The UPC welcomed Wortabet’s humanitarian engagement, but the administration did not state whether the medicine could be used in Beirut. Instead, Somerville advised him to travel on to Aleppo as soon as the streets were safer.<sup>369</sup> Wortabet and his family finally reached Aleppo at the end of October 1860.

For the next five years, his work in Aleppo, Killis, and Idlib was marked by few successes. Even with his outstanding training and experience, Wortabet could not transform the mission that had already been struggling under the leadership of the missionary R. Grant Brown. In 1863, Brown left the mission and returned to Scotland. John Wortabet was henceforth the only missionary, supported by native helpers. Instead of attending to the Jewish population, in whose name he had been sent to Aleppo, he began to focus on the Christians whom he believed were in need of missionary intervention.<sup>370</sup> “Our various Agencies if turned to the Jews would not work at all,” he reported in 1866. “We turned our efforts to the nominally Christian Churches because to them alone was there any door of access.”<sup>371</sup> When cholera broke out in Aleppo at the end of 1865, Wortabet and his family felt compelled to leave. They spent nine weeks in the mountains, along with the British consul and a Syrian helper. Officials in Edinburgh were upset that Wortabet had left his post

115.5.25), and provided by Christine Lindner. Lindner notes that in this letter Anderson clearly differentiates between “native agency” and “missionary.” Native Protestants could not be “missionaries”; this title was reserved for Americans. As depicted elsewhere in this study, there was a discrepancy between the mission theology of the ABCFM and its practice in the field. Bustani’s *Jam’iyat Beyrut al-Injiliyya*, founded in 1862, was consistently translated as “Native Missionary Society” in the *Missionary Herald*. The evangelists commissioned by this society were likewise identified as “missionaries.” See MH 58 (1862), in: ROS 5, 49.

364 UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (July 3, 1860), 253.

365 UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (October 2, 1860), 268.

366 Somerville to Wortabet (October 4, 1860): NLS, MS 7643. See also Lindner, “Negotiating the Field,” 268.

367 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 194: “On Sunday, July 1st, no church bells were rung in Beirut. I preached in English, and Mr. Araman and Dr. Wortabet in Arabic.” Wortabet told the UPC “that he had been occupied in preaching for the American Missionaries.” See UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (October 2, 1860), 268.

368 Ibid.: In August, Wortabet wrote to the UPC “that he had taken charge of two wards in an hospital which has been erected for the sick multitudes.”

369 Somerville to Wortabet (October 4, 1860): NLS, MS 7643.

370 UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (October 27, 1863), 588.

371 UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (June 26, 1866), 740.

without first asking for permission, especially since his skills as a doctor were urgently needed on site. Wortabet explained to the UPC that he and his family were in such poor health that leaving was absolutely essential.<sup>372</sup> In the same letter, he asked to send his sons to Edinburgh with the assistance of a “fund for aiding in the education of the children of Foreign Missionaries.” This time, the UPC was less accommodating. Because the fund was intended only for Scottish missionaries, Wortabet’s request was denied “on the ground that Syria is his native country.”<sup>373</sup> For the UPC, too, equality apparently only went so far. Wortabet lobbied for a raise of £50, since he otherwise could not afford to send his sons to the SPC or the American college in Istanbul.<sup>374</sup> The documents of the Scottish mission do not show whether his request was approved.

In June 1866, John Wortabet wrote to the UPC:

I cannot conceal the fact that I am disheartened and discouraged, and that the hopes I had formed all along as to the prospective results of the Mission are beginning to fail. As a Jewish Mission I have already written to you, our work is a complete failure so far.<sup>375</sup>

Neither work among the Jews, nor among other Christian confessions, would bear fruit in the future, Wortabet continued. Despite Somerville’s assurances, given the events of the past months, Wortabet was afraid that he had lost the confidence of the UPC.<sup>376</sup> While the UPC was deciding to end its mission in Aleppo and assign Wortabet to another mission field,<sup>377</sup> he received an offer from the SPC in Beirut, which was formally established later that year.<sup>378</sup> Already in 1862, Jessup had told him that the missionaries were hoping to build “a large Protestant native institution in Beirut of a high order.”<sup>379</sup>

#### 4. Wortabet’s return to Beirut as a doctor

John Wortabet received an honorary doctorate from Yale College for his article about fevers in Syria, which appeared in the *American Journal of Medical Science* in 1853.<sup>380</sup> In 1866, he traveled to England and New York, in order to refresh his medical training before assuming his new position at the SPC. He was awarded the

372 UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (March 27, 1866), 724–25.

373 UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (March 27, 1866), 726.

374 Ibid.

375 UPC-GMBM, Vol. 2 (June 26, 1866), 740.

376 Somerville to Wortabet (June 28, 1866): NLS, MS 7640.

377 Somerville to Wortabet (October 3, 1866): NLS, MS 7640. In December 1866, Wortabet sent a final letter to the UPC, thanking the Scottish mission for its kindness. The UPC gave him a final stipend of £25 for the move to Beirut. See Somerville to Wortabet (February 18, 1867): NLS, MS 7647.

378 Marten, *Attempting to Bring the Gospel Home*, 60.

379 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 239.

380 Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 377 (note 1). In a letter written from Hasbeiya on August 26, 1852, Wortabet asked Smith to forward a package with his article to a certain Dr. Robinson, who wanted to present Wortabet’s work before the college faculty. Wortabet hoped that this would bring him the promised honorary title: “There are many

degree of Medical Doctor from New York University Medical College in March 1867.<sup>381</sup> As LINDNER describes, the Beirut that John and Salome encountered upon their return was very different from the city that they had departed seven years earlier:

This was a new phase for the Protestant community, one which was not defined by the work of ABCFM missionaries to convey their definition of Protestantism to the residents of Syria who then negotiated and adapted this faith and culture. Rather, the Wortabet's return occurred when the now established, but refined, Protestant community sought to positively influence the Syrian region through re-negotiating and re-defining its position within this dynamic milieu.<sup>382</sup>

The Syrian Protestant community was more independent and self-reliant than ever before, although this did not mean that Wortabet's problems with the Americans had ended. Before he began to teach at the SPC, the college's leaders debated his employment at length. The ABCFM's past experiences with Wortabet played a prominent role in this discussion. A key instigator of the debate was the aforementioned David Stuart Dodge, instructor of modern languages at the SPC and later treasurer of the Board of Trustees in New York. The missionary William M. Thomson, who had known Wortabet for many years, supported hiring him as an instructor in the medical faculty. The department was to be staffed by Van Dyck, Thomson,<sup>383</sup> and George Post, but at least one other instructor was needed. In July 1866, five months before the SPC opened, Dodge expressed his first doubts about Wortabet, requesting that Daniel Bliss not act too hastily in this matter.<sup>384</sup> About one month later, Dodge thoroughly laid out his concerns. Although Dodge did not question Wortabet's "moral character," he raised other objections to Wortabet's hiring, particularly Wortabet's departure "when they had justly looked upon him, for years, as one who was to prove an earnest and useful laborer in the field."<sup>385</sup> Instead, Wortabet had deserted the mission. Dodge also mentioned Wortabet's position in Aleppo: "the salary and authority he has possessed, the unhappy facilities about him. I should be slow to believe that he is fitted for the high position proposed." Dodge did not believe that Wortabet should be granted a teaching position equal to Van Dyck, Thomson, or George Post. Instead, Wortabet should assume a subordinate position, just as he had done previously as pastor in Hasbeiya. For Wortabet, this would be unthinkable. Dodge further raised doubts about John's medical aptitude: "What does he know of years of observation in Hospitals of great cities? What wide acquaintance has he with the best literature and living men in the Profession either

circumstances, in which such a testimony will be very convenient, if not extremely necessary." See ABC 60 (98), (HHL).

381 F. J. Bliss, *Reminiscences*, 189; Penrose, "That they may have life", 37.

382 Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 269.

383 Although it is not clear whether William M. Thomson possessed a degree in medicine, Dodge recommended him as a potential candidate. See Dodge to Bliss (Hastings, July 3, 1866): AA.2.3.1.3.1. Thomson was a member of the SPC's Board of Managers. See American University of Beirut, Directory of AUB Faculty Members, Staff Members, and Officers, 1880 -, accessed September 2016, <http://aubdirectory.aub.edu.lb/Pages/MembersListing.aspx>.

384 Dodge to Bliss (Hastings, July 3, 1866): AA.2.3.1.3.1.

385 Dodge to Bliss (North Wales, August 5, 1866): AA.2.3.1.3.1.

in England or America?" Precisely for this reason, Wortabet was willing to spend an additional year in England to gain the necessary experience. But for Dodge, this was not enough ("Is a simple year to give him all that?"). Dodge knew that this additional training would have to be paid for by the Board of Trustees in New York. The Board could not, however, be expected to pay such a sum for the "inferior" performance that Wortabet was likely to deliver. Dodge did concede that Wortabet was the only native teacher worthy of consideration for the advertised position.<sup>386</sup>

With respect to theoretical and practical medical experience, one might well ask what the distinction was between Wortabet and Van Dyck. Van Dyck had last been to the United States in 1854, in order to receive additional medical training.<sup>387</sup> Dodge was presumably more concerned about the college's English and American benefactors, who wanted to know that their generous financial donations were being well spent. An American professor seemed more suitable than a Syrian, especially one whose career path (despite its successes) might be seen as too inconsistent through American eyes. "Our leading Pastors and benevolent men have no sickly sentimentality of enthusiasm about 'real, live natives of the Holy Land' ... to entrusting them with funds or ... sending such sums as will be necessary. ... I can ... say, I fear that," Dodge wrote to Bliss in another letter.<sup>388</sup> Dodge advised Daniel Bliss to let the matter lie, as enough other problems were already complicating the SPC's opening, and the medical department might have to open later than planned. According to Dodge, Wortabet should not end his relationship with the UPC until the Board of Trustees had a chance to discuss the matter thoroughly.<sup>389</sup> But Dodge himself did not let the matter lie. In another letter to Daniel Bliss, dated August 21, 1866, he reported meeting in London with a Mr. Hengh, who was not enthusiastic about Wortabet's plans to come to England. Hengh had unpleasant memories of the "two worthless ... vagabond brothers" and John's first visit to England. A further sentence in Dodge's letter revealed Hengh's concerns: "He also spoke strongly of the Jerusalem troubles and attributes much of the difficulty there to natives, who had gained positions of influence and became ambitious for increased power etc."<sup>390</sup>

Had nothing changed in Beirut for the Wortabets after all? When William M. Thomson (who had supported Wortabet) learned that John's nationality was reason for exclusion, he expressed his disappointment: "If the appointment of native professors is to be impossible simply because they are native, I must decline to have anything more to do with the college."<sup>391</sup> Unwillingness to hire Wortabet because he was Syrian was not the only issue, however. Of even greater concern was that college might lose its reputation with a native instructor. Was it not true, Dodge asked, "that to have any native, whatever his talents or position, represent us in this

386 Ibid.

387 See chapter II, section 2.2.

388 Dodge to Bliss (August 21, 1866): AA.2.3.1.3.1.

389 Dodge to Bliss (North Wales, August 5, 1866): AA.2.3.1.3.1. In fact, Wortabet received his regular pay from the UPC through the end of 1866. See Somerville to Wortabet (Edinburgh, October 3, 1866): NLS, MS 7646.

390 Dodge to Bliss (August 21, 1866): AA.2.3.1.3.1.

391 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 303.

country is to lower the enterprise in the eyes of the public ... ?”<sup>392</sup> Pointing to past experience, the Board of Trustees doubted whether people of different nationalities could work well together.<sup>393</sup> If the overall situation in Beirut had changed for the Wortabet, in the United States there was no difference. Old prejudices continued to inform the attitudes of those who held positions of authority on the other side of the ocean; they enthusiastically supported foreign educational institutions without wanting to integrate these institutions within their cultural context. Despite considerable resistance – and an unwritten rule against appointing native professors, which remained in place for decades to come – Rev. John Wortabet M.D. was hired as the SPC’s first and (initially) only Syrian professor in September 1866. He was immediately sent on leave and spent the next year preparing for his new post in England and the United States. After his return, on September 1, 1867, he became a professor of anatomy and physiology.<sup>394</sup> Although no proof of this exists, it appears that Bliss and the Board of Managers in Beirut were able to prevail over the Board of Trustees in New York. It also seems likely that Wortabet did not learn about the correspondence between Dodge and Bliss. Given his past resolve, he would have likely responded to David S. Dodge’s counterarguments by turning down the position.

Those who had had faith in Wortabet were proven correct: “He did excellent work as a teacher.”<sup>395</sup> The SPC’s annual reports and his mission colleagues related nothing unsatisfactory about Wortabet’s work at the college. He was elected as secretary for president Daniel Bliss, and for the first five years he directed the medical department together with Van Dyck, until additional positions were created to accommodate the heavy workload.<sup>396</sup>

Although Wortabet stood somewhat in the shadow of his former teacher Van Dyck, his students respected him highly. Like his colleagues Post and Van Dyck, he also wrote textbooks for classes at the SPC (see below), and he was involved in other scholarly projects. After his death, Jessup wrote in 1910: “He was a man of great industry, an exact scholar, and successful physician. He was especially kind to the sick poor, and had a wide reputation throughout Syria.”<sup>397</sup> Shortly after Wortabet began work at the SPC in 1867, Jessup attempted to convince him to take on the position of pastor at the Beirut Church. No one else had been found, and even the ABCFM saw Wortabet as the only qualified man for the position.<sup>398</sup> He was not at all interested, however; “he absolutely refused.”<sup>399</sup> Jessup wrote: “He was

392 Dodge to Bliss (August 21, 1866): AA.2.3.1.3.1.

393 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 303–4: The objection was based on “certain well-known cases” when Germans and Englishmen had not worked well together.

394 John Wortabet to Daniel Bliss (Beirut, January 22, 1868): AA.2.3.1.10.2: It apparently took some time before Wortabet was paid by the college. In January 1868, he asked to receive his pay dating back to September 1, 1867. His position had begun on that date, and he had incurred many expenses since then. The Board of Trustees must have not made the money available right away.

395 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 304.

396 Penrose, “*That they may have life*”, 21 and 42.

397 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 781.

398 *Ibid.*, 344.

399 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 313.



*Figure 11: The first professors of the Syrian Protestant College, 1870–1874  
(First row, left to right: Cornelius Van Dyck, Daniel Bliss, John Wortabet; second row,  
left to right: David Stuart Dodge, George Post, Edwin Lewis, Harvey Porter)*

receiving a salary equal to, if not greater, than that of Dr. Thomson, Dr. Post, or myself, and could not expect as much from the native church,<sup>400</sup> yet this was probably not the chief reason for declining the office.”<sup>401</sup> The mission did, however, turn to Wortabet on another occasion. During Henry Harris Jessup’s absence in 1868, Wortabet preached in his stead at the native congregation. Van Dyck informed his colleagues at the mission that Wortabet’s assistance was only temporary: “It’s useless to hope that he will be the Pastor of this church. . . . He gets £300 from the College and deserves it, for he gives all his time to it and works hard.”<sup>402</sup> Instead, Wortabet remained active in the Anglo-American Congregation, the former mission church which he had joined in 1847,<sup>403</sup> although he later joined the Syrian church

400 The mission offered him five hundred piasters for preaching at the Beirut Church: “Records of the Syria Mission and the Holy Land 1867–1870” (January 17, 1868): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.1., 194.

401 *Ibid.*, 344.

402 Van Dyck to Clark (Beirut, January 25, 1868): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (515). In a letter to Somerville dated September 12, 1866, Wortabet wrote that the SPC had promised him a salary of £350 (he had received £250 from the UPC): NLS, MS 7646.

403 According to the Anglo-American Congregation’s annual reports, he participated in numerous committees, and he was the “English representative” in the pastor’s committee until February 1894. See “Minutes of the Meeting of the Anglo-American Congregational Committee held 30

because of his position in Hasbeiya.<sup>404</sup> The former mission church seemed to be like a home church for him. Wortabet's actions make clear that he wanted to be considered the equal of his English and American colleagues. (Figure 11)

Teaching became a new passion for the doctor and theologian. According to his student Ya'qub Sarruf, Wortabet surpassed even Van Dyck in the clarity of his classroom presentations, particularly in the subject of anatomy.<sup>405</sup> Wortabet took pride in repeating the content of his courses until it was grasped by every student. The unusually long title of his 1871 anatomy book told readers in no uncertain terms what they could expect from this textbook:

Clarification of the fundamentals of anatomy. Written as an aid for native speakers of Arabic [and] drawn from the most recent books that are recognized in English and American schools. It explains all necessary questions for students, clearly and without complications. Simply arranged, easy to bookmark and understand. With 364 explanatory illustrations.<sup>406</sup>

Wortabet did not dedicate himself exclusively to modern academic medicine, but also incorporated centuries-old teachings of the Greeks, Romans, and Arabs.<sup>407</sup> Like his role model Ibn Sina (Avicenna), he recommended natural remedies.<sup>408</sup> In his college lectures and public speeches, he never tired of emphasizing that physical activity and a healthy diet could prevent many illnesses.<sup>409</sup> In addition to his teaching, he worked for around fifteen years as a doctor in the Prussian hospital of the Kaiserwerth deaconesses.<sup>410</sup> For these achievements, he and his colleagues Cornelius Van Dyck and George Post received a special award from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>411</sup> He received two additional awards for his work during the 1875 cholera epidemic, and for his scholarly publications (see below). In the meantime, Wortabet had become a highly respected figure in the medical world, active as a member of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh, the London Society for Knowledge of Diseases, as well as the New York Academy of Medicine.<sup>412</sup>

March 1871," in: AAC minutes (1868–1891), 19; "Report read at the Annual Meeting held in the Memorial Hall" (February 9, 1894), in: AAC minutes (1881–1905), 42: NEST/SC.

404 Membership was, of course, required for employees of the Syrian Protestant church.

405 From a speech by Y. Sarruf, given at the dedication of busts of Van Dyck and Wortabet in 1913, in: *Al-Kulliyya* 4, no. 6 (1913), cited in: Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu'assasun li l-Jami'a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 178.

406 More in appendix I.

407 Wortabet, "Al-Tahdhib," 610.

408 Ibid., 542. Avicenna and medical texts from ancient Greece were admired by Arab practitioners. See Van Dyck, "On the Present Condition of the Medical Profession in Syria," 561–62.

409 Y. Sarruf, "Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat, 1829–1908," *al-Muqtataf* 30 (1905) and 34 (1909), cited in Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu'assasun li l-Jami'a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 183, 185; Wortabet, "Al-Tahdhib," 610.

410 More on the hospital in chapter II, section 2.4.

411 Wortabet, "La Yadi' Fadl al-Fudala," 195.

412 Y. Sarruf, "Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat, 1829–1908," *al-Muqtataf* 30 (1905) and 34 (1909), cited in Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu'assasun li l-Jami'a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 184.

Wortabet's relationship to the college changed in 1882 because of the Lewis affair and the departure of almost all of his colleagues in the medical faculty.<sup>413</sup> These events led to his own resignation on July 10, 1883.<sup>414</sup> At the end of 1882, the college's administration faced a considerable problem; there were twenty-eight medical students, but only two professors, George Post and John Wortabet. With just one professor able to teach in Arabic, the department's needs were not easily met. Although he disagreed with the college's leadership, Wortabet seemed reluctant to sever ties with this outstanding institution. In his letter of resignation, written in July 1883, he agreed to work as an instructor for three more years, taking on Van Dyck's class in pathology.<sup>415</sup> With the lack of competent medical instructors who were able to teach in Arabic, the question again arose whether English should be designated as the language of instruction. Other departments had already instituted this change in 1879. Only the medical faculty, because of its competent instructors, had not made the transition. With the hiring of new professors from America in 1883, the college's medical classes were henceforth taught in English as well. Wortabet did not agree with this arrangement. Students had come to the SPC with the expectation that they would be taught in their native language. He said that he would continue teaching the subjects of anatomy, physiology, and pathology in Arabic. He agreed to admit students into his classes who were studying medicine in English – but, he added, “it is to be understood that I shall not be held responsible for their proficiency in their studies.”<sup>416</sup>

When the Board of Managers received Wortabet's resignation in 1883, along with his agreement to continue working as an instructor, it was expected that he would continue to preach and hold devotions regularly, as before.<sup>417</sup> But he no longer felt a sense of obligation towards the college. He was willing to preach occasionally, but he saw this as a matter “for my own conscience, not for others to dictate.”<sup>418</sup>

He continued to work as an instructor through 1886, and for the next ten years he filled in as a substitute when needed.<sup>419</sup> When the German Theophilus Waldmeier opened a psychiatric clinic in Asfuriya with the assistance of funds from Europe and North America in 1896, Wortabet was elected president of its executive

413 Van Dyck and his son William left the SPC in 1882 (see chapter II, section 2.4). Richard W. Bridgestocke, who taught on the medical faculty, and John Dickson, member of the Board of Managers, resigned in 1883. See Dr. Richard W. Bridgestocke to Daniel Bliss (March 5, 1883), and John Dickson to Daniel Bliss (Damascus, May 7, 1883): AA.2.3.1.9.4.

414 John Wortabet to the Board of Managers (Beirut, July 10, 1883): AA.2.3.1.11.12.

415 “A Report of the Faculty 1883 to the Board of Managers of the Syrian Protestant College”: ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2., 76.

416 Wortabet to the Board of Managers (Beirut, July 10, 1883): AA.2.3.1.11.12.

417 James S. Dennis to the faculty of the SPC (November 27, 1883). It is unclear why the letter is dated so late, since Wortabet had already responded to its content on July 16, 1883 (see below).

418 John Wortabet to James S. Dennis (Beirut, July 16, 1883): AA.2.3.1.11.2.

419 SPC annual report (1888): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 107; SPC annual report (July 1890): *ibid.*, 119; Penrose, “*That they may have life*”, 38.

committee, comprised of missionaries and other respected Protestants.<sup>420</sup> The clinic was urgently needed, since appropriate treatment of mental illness was completely unknown in Syria at this time.<sup>421</sup> Until his death in 1909, Wortabet also maintained a private medical practice on Zeytuni Street in Beirut.<sup>422</sup>

Despite twenty years of teaching, to the Board of Trustees Wortabet remained what he no longer wanted to be – a “native.” When Wortabet’s contract with the college ended in 1886, David S. Dodge (who was known for his sharp tongue) told Bliss: “Do not keep him.”<sup>423</sup> A few months later, Dodge made the derogatory comment: “What a blessing to be rid of the last of that half-hearted, half-educated (in the best sense), unwilling, unamerican, of missionary line of professors.”<sup>424</sup>

The Kaiserswerth deaconesses viewed Wortabet differently. He had worked as a doctor in their orphanage since 1871, alongside his teaching at the SPC. In the 1880s, he regularly filled in for Dr. L’Orange, the hospital’s head doctor, who spent his summers in Europe. When he resigned from his position, Dr. William Van Dyck (Cornelius Van Dyck’s son) and John Wortabet were named as candidates to replace him.<sup>425</sup>

## 5. John Wortabet as author and translator

John Wortabet’s many books, articles, and translations demonstrate that he was as well-read and intellectually curious as his American colleagues. With his outstanding education, he wrote and translated works of theology, medicine, and cultural anthropology in English and Arabic. Among English readers, his best-known work is *Researches into the Religions of Syria* (1860), which he wrote while still in Hasbeiya and published in England. Through his study of original sources relating to the religions of the Middle East, he sought to depict these religions’ theology and the spiritual habitus of their communities. As described in the book’s preface, Wortabet’s intent was to make a significant contribution to the study of Eastern religions, and also to dispel widespread misconceptions about them.<sup>426</sup> Wortabet focused on

420 Jessup (1910b), 521–23: The institution was the first of its kind in Syria, kept open through donations since it could not rely on state support. Patients came from all parts of Asia as well as from Europe. “The work is international and undenominational, and appeals to the liberal in all lands and of all forms of religious faith” (Ibid., 523). Jessup emphasized that the institution was the result of Christian missionary efforts (Ibid., 524).

421 Van Dyck, “On the Present Condition of the Medical Profession in Syria,” 591: “Insanity is generally attributed to Satanic possession, and no remedies used for it, except confinement, exorcising, or a pilgrimage to the shrine of some saint.”

422 D. S., “Biography – Rev. John Wortabet,” 4.

423 David S. Dodge to Daniel Bliss (Washington, April 29, 1886): AA.2.3.1.5.3. (The original document contains a mistake; it is dated 1866, instead of 1886, which is impossible given the letter’s content.)

424 David S. Dodge to Daniel Bliss (July 15, 1886): cited in Zahlan, *The American University of Beirut*, 114b. Zahlan notes that this letter is held in the AUB archive, although I was unable to locate it during my research.

425 Sophie Gräff to Julius Disselhoff (Beirut, January 7, 1887): AFKSK AKD 243.

426 Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, v.

the Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, and Maronite churches, as well as Sunni, Wahhabi, and Shi'a (*Metawileh*) Islam; he also depicted the Alawites (*Nusairiyeh*) and the Druzes. Because Wortabet wrote the study quickly, with no time for revisions before the book went to print, a chapter on Judaism could not be included, as originally planned. He did, however, conclude the study with a thorough analysis of Protestantism in Syria. As the book's organization suggested, the author gave the Protestant faith special attention among the religions of Syria. By introducing all of the different faith communities, Wortabet's goal as a missionary and theologian was to show "that all false creeds must ultimately give place throughout the world to the religion of Christ."<sup>427</sup> He mostly – if not entirely – avoided offensive polemics, while showing the reader that the theologies derived from other religious sources represented a false path.<sup>428</sup> He did refer to European and American scholarly literature, particularly for historical narrative, but because of his linguistic talents and local contacts he could also draw upon manuscripts, historical documents, and liturgical texts in Greek and Arabic.<sup>429</sup> Because of persistent, civil war-like conditions in Mount Lebanon, the French had succeeded in obtaining secret theological writings of the Druzes. Wortabet was able to cite from this cache in his work.<sup>430</sup> *Researches into the Religions of Syria* did not simply summarize European works about the Near East; rather, it was intended both to complement and correct the European works. Through personal experience, decades of observation, and a kind of superior perspective that characterized many of the missionaries' writings, Wortabet depicted the mentalities of the different confessions and the everyday practice of their faiths.<sup>431</sup> His concluding chapter on Protestantism did not, of course, neglect the American mission ("we cannot do any justice to our subject without a constant reference to the actors whom it has pleased God to employ in this work").<sup>432</sup> Wortabet's negative experiences with the American Board did not lessen his appreciation of the missionaries' accomplishments ("the resources of all kinds which time has brought under their command are many and highly important") or his own deep religious conviction. In contrast to his depictions of theology and liturgy in the other chapters, in this section Wortabet focused exclusively on the activities of different Protestant missions, concluding with a long essay on their adopted strategies (1. Circulation of the Bible; 2. Preaching of the word; 3. Organisation of converts into churches; 4. Common schools; 5. The press; 6. Native agency; 7. Medical

427 Ibid., vi.

428 Ibid., 63–64: "In the preceding concise sketch of the errors of the Greek Church, we have rarely made a remark of our own on the important subjects at which we have glanced. We have preferred to let it speak from the books which hold a prominent and authoritative place."

429 According to Zaydan, Wortabet arranged for the publication of some of these confessions' religious texts after his own book was published ("al-Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat," 429).

430 Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 328; Zaydan, "al-Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat," 426.

431 Wortabet wrote that the Rum Orthodox "service is read as fast as possible, giving the appearance of the utmost irreverence, and making the worship of God as senseless and formal as could be intentionally done" (*Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 69–70). The Shi'a, "in their habits, dress, and mode of living, are by far the most filthy race in the country" (Ibid., 281).

432 Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 360.

agency). With respect to points 3 and 6, the author included very personal and critical words, which clearly related to his own experiences with the ABCFM. Wortabet portrayed the spread of the Protestant faith not only as a salvation for the people of Syria. He also showed the hazards that could arise when both Western missionaries and Syrians encountered a culture that was foreign to their own. These problems did not, however, erode the author's confidence that the missionaries' work would ultimately bear fruit. When the right conditions were in place,<sup>433</sup> he could say

that reformation begin[s] first with individuals, and then, by acting on small bodies, scattered here and there, reach and affect the whole mass. ... But the issue of this matter does not lie altogether at the mercy of civilization, liberty, and knowledge: there is a gracious God above who has promised that the time shall surely come ...<sup>434</sup>

Wortabet's *Researches* was intended for the English-language reading public, and it became one of the most widely read works on the Near East at that time. Its analysis of mission practices in Syria from a "native" perspective was especially pioneering.

In conjunction with the American mission, there were numerous initiatives to develop Turkish-,<sup>435</sup> Armenian-,<sup>436</sup> and Arabic-language<sup>437</sup> dictionaries, in order to benefit future generations of missionaries and language scholars. Wortabet, his son William Thomson, and his SPC colleague Harvey Porter produced a thorough English-Arabic, Arabic-English dictionary (*Qamus 'Arabi wa Inklisi wa Inklisi wa 'Arabi*, first date of publication unknown), which later appeared in numerous posthumous editions and is still available today. William Thomson, Wortabet's son and the dictionary's chief editor, wrote in the preface:

The object of the present work is to supply the want, long felt by many, of an accurate Arabic-English Dictionary, which shall contain within a moderate compass, the words most in use among Arabic classical writers ... it is hoped that Oriental Scholars will approve the result.

Shortly before his death, John Wortabet participated in the English book series "Wisdom of the East," assembling Arab, Persian, and Egyptian sayings from the Koran and other wisdom literature in the volume *Arabian Wisdom: Selections from the Arabic* (1910).<sup>438</sup> Even before this publication, Wortabet had translated English

433 In particular, he meant that missionaries had to accept the freedom and self-responsibility of Syrian Protestants.

434 Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 71.

435 MH 1826 (22), in: ROS 1, 345: The missionary William Goodell reported that he was working on a Turkish, an Italian-Turkish, and a Turkish-Italian dictionary with Bishop Dionysius Carabet.

436 John Wortabet's father Gregory worked with William Goodell on an Armenian-Turkish dictionary. See "A brief memoir of Gregory Wortabet": ABC 16.6.3., 26.

437 MH 22 (1826), in: ROS 1, 360. Pliny Fisk could not complete a planned English-Arabic dictionary before his death. Yuhanna Abcarius (see appendix II, no. 1) had the short version of an English-Arabic dictionary printed at the American Mission Press. Van Dyck later published a new, revised edition (see appendix I). Its year of publication is not known. See PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, no. 225.

438 Before this volume, an earlier version was published. Its copies sold out so quickly that the publisher recommended a new, more comprehensive edition, which finally appeared in 1910, two years after Wortabet's death. See Y. Sarruf, "Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat, 1827–1908," *al-*

wisdom literature into Arabic,<sup>439</sup> and Arabic wisdom literature into English.<sup>440</sup> He had studied Talmudic wisdom as well. As stated in the book's preface, the goal of the series was for its books to be "ambassadors of good-will and understanding between East and West – the old world of Thought and the new of Action."<sup>441</sup>

Wortabet was involved not only in medical societies. As a member of the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences, he lectured on "the measure of the progress of knowledge in Syria, at the present time, and its causes" (*Miqdar Ziyadat al- 'Ilm fi Suriyya fi Hadha l-Jil wa 'Ilaluha*).<sup>442</sup> For a short time he even served as president of the Oriental Scientific Association (*Majma'at al- 'Ilmi al-Sharqi*), founded in 1882.<sup>443</sup> In the society's annual address from 1884, Wortabet – who was by then a very experienced teacher himself – spoke on the importance of education (*al-Tarbiya al-Madrasiya*) for the future of Syria.<sup>444</sup>

Wortabet's excellent command of English made him an able translator of English-language Christian literature for the mission press in Beirut. Since there is little information about how translations for the press were created, it seems likely that Wortabet was involved in the translation of many more books than are listed in appendix I. He is known for sure to have translated the following two theological works: Archibald Alexander, *A Brief Outline of the Evidence of the Christian Religion (Dalil al-Sawab ila Sadiq al-Kitab)*, 1851,<sup>445</sup> and Carl Heinrich von Bogatzky, *Güldenenes Schatz-Kästlein der Kinder Gottes (Kitab al-Khizanat al-Dhahabiyat*

*Muqtataf* 30 (1905) and 34 (1909), cited in Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu'assasun li l-Jami'a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 184.

439 Wortabet, *Arabian Wisdom*, 12: for example, by Marcus Aurelius, Shakespeare, Tennyson, etc.

440 Wortabet, *Arabian Wisdom*, 12. He mentions works (*The Instruction of Ptah-Hotep; Sadi's Scroll of Wisdom*) that recently appeared in Arabic magazines and were widely read by Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Egypt and Syria.

441 Wortabet, *Arabian Wisdom*, 10.

442 Khuri, *al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 33–35: Wortabet's talk identified numerous causes for the rising level of education and interest in learning within Syria: economic liberalization, which encouraged encounters with other cultures; the dissemination of books printed at home and abroad; growing interest in education among the ruling aristocratic families; and the founding of new schools. At the end, Wortabet appealed to Syrians that there was still much to be done in order to further their country's development, and that everyone would have to work towards reaching this goal (*ibid.*, 35). For more on the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences, see chapter I, section 2.4.

443 The short-lived society was founded by Ya'qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr in 1882. Both Van Dyck and Wortabet served as president, and the society's members included well-known scholars like William Van Dyck, Butrus and Salim al-Bustani, Mikha'il Mishaqa, and Ibrahim al-Yaziji. Like its predecessors, this society was dedicated to the cause of knowledge. See Zaydan, *Tarikh Adab al-Lughah al-'Arabiyya, al-Juz' a al-Rabi'*, 73. Wortabet also belonged to the Syrian Scientific Society (*Jam'iyyat al-'Ilmiyya al-Suriyya*). See Hanssen, "*Fin de siècle*" *Beirut*, 169.

444 Printed in *al-Muqtataf* 8 (1884), 449–64, 543–44. In his talk, Wortabet emphasized the importance of proper schooling for the good of future generations. It was essential to have well-trained professionals, not only to convey knowledge in a comprehensible way, but also to serve as mentors to male and female students. Wortabet pointed to educational institutions in the ancient world and present-day Europe as models for teaching.

445 More in appendix I.

etc.), 1870.<sup>446</sup> As a doctor and professor at the SPC, he contributed to the production of new Arabic textbooks that the college urgently needed, since “in 1867 there were practically no medical text books in Arabic.”<sup>447</sup> Wortabet wrote two comprehensive textbooks for the subjects of anatomy (*al-Taudih fi Usul al-Tashrih*, 1871)<sup>448</sup> and physiology (*Usul al-Fisyulujiya*, 1877),<sup>449</sup> parts of which he translated from English.<sup>450</sup> Numerous Arabic-language essays by Wortabet appeared in *al-Muqtataf*<sup>451</sup> and the SPC medical journal *al-Tabib*.<sup>452</sup> For English-language periodicals, he wrote a series of articles on diseases such as the plague, leprosy, typhus, and cholera.<sup>453</sup>

## 6. Final observations

It is difficult to assign John Wortabet a specific cultural identity. He was raised from a young age in a Western-oriented context within his homeland of Syria. His first years of schooling were completed in English, and he later studied medicine and theology with American missionaries. Wortabet conversed fluently in English, and he dressed in a European manner. As deeply as he had been shaped by Western culture, however, Europeans and Americans saw him as “native.” The ABCFM was adamant that Wortabet should not become alienated from his “own” culture. In theory, the ABCFM supported converts’ cultural independence, but this support was quickly withdrawn if they began – like Wortabet and Bustani – to develop their

446 Wortabet translated from an English version of Bogatzky’s work (see appendix I).

447 Penrose, “*That they may have life*”, 32.

448 PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, no. 195.

449 *Ibid.*, no. 194.

450 Additional works written by Wortabet for the SPC: *Mukhtasar fi A’da’ al-Jasad al-Bashari wa Wada’ifihi* (Overview of the Parts of the Human Body), 1872; the comprehensive *Atlas fi l-Tashrih wa l-Fisyulujiya wa Ma’ahu Mukhtasir fi A’da’ al-Jisd al-Bashri wa Waza’ifaha* (Atlas of Human Anatomy and Physiology), 1878; as well as book of advices for a general readership, *Kifayat al-Awam fi Hifz al-Sihha wa Tadbir al-Asqam* (Hygiene for Staying Healthy and Preventing Disease), 1881, and *Mabadi’ Ilm al-Saha* (Fundamentals of Hygiene). See also appendix I.

451 Many of these essays contained a moral lesson. See, for example, “Khutba” (Speech [for SPC Graduation]), *al-Muqtataf* 5, no. 3 (1880): 57–61. Here Wortabet emphasized that students at the SPC acquired not only professional knowledge, but also an education for life. Piety, diligence, and love for others took precedence over laziness, egotism, and the desire for profit. In “al-Tahdhib” (The Upbringing), he instructed young people in the upbringing of body, mind, and spirit. Physical activity, a healthy diet, diligence, enthusiasm, and positive character traits were key. See also “Wasaya Mufida” (Useful Recommendations), *al-Muqtataf* 31, no. 6 (1906): 505–6.

452 The journal first appeared under the title *Akhbar al-Tibbiyya* in 1874. It soon became a comprehensive academic journal that covered new medical developments in Syria and abroad, and that provided a platform for communication between practicing doctors.

453 Y. Sarruf, “Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat, 1827–1908,” *al-Muqtataf* 30 (1905) and 34 (1909), cited in Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu’assasun li l-Jami’a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 184. Wortabet also published this travel report: “The Hermon, and the Physical Features of Syria and Northern Palestine,” *Journal of the Royal Geographic Society of London* 31 (1862): 100–8.

own views and courses of action. Wortabet's education opened many doors for him, although for years he was uncertain about his future calling. In 1850, Wortabet's longstanding mentor Eli Smith expressed his concern that Wortabet might choose the wrong path, if he did not get to know the different areas of theology "sufficiently to give his thoughts a right direction."<sup>454</sup>

It is not clear why John Wortabet applied to the mission in Aleppo in 1860. The mission's work among the Jews had not demonstrated any particular success, and in his own book (*Researches into the Religions of Syria*, published that same year), Wortabet described numerous missions in the region, but not the mission of the UPC.<sup>455</sup> At the time of his book's publication, he had already applied to the UPC and presumably initiated contact with the Scottish missionary Brown in Aleppo. Might the application to Scotland be viewed as an escape from the ABCFM? Wortabet's longstanding wish to travel to Great Britain had to do with his brother Gregory, who had already traveled to the United States and England in the early 1850s, beginning to study medicine in London around 1855.<sup>456</sup> Wortabet sought opportunities for professional development that were not open to him in Syria.

As a doctor and teacher, he finally found his place in Syrian society. His patients appreciated that he treated everyone, even those who were unable to pay.<sup>457</sup> Modesty, diligence, piety, and love for others were values that he imparted to his students. According to Wortabet, only those who earned an honest living could maintain their integrity and lead a successful life. Benevolent people created "pillars of knowledge" ("a 'midat al-'ilm") by building schools, hospitals, and homes for the poor, thereby advancing civilization ("yarfa' al-tammadun").<sup>458</sup> Wortabet was clearly grateful for the missionaries' accomplishments in Syria.

For John Wortabet, it went without saying that his children should also receive the privilege of a higher education. After the UPC refused to pay for the education of his sons (presumably Henry and Erwin), he was able to finance their medical studies in Great Britain only after accepting his position at the SPC.<sup>459</sup> In 1872, his son Henry was hired to teach English and Latin at the SPC.<sup>460</sup> Two of his daughters were educated by the Kaiserswerth deaconesses,<sup>461</sup> who founded an orphanage in Beirut in 1860, in order to train young Syrian girls (including half-orphans) as nurses.<sup>462</sup> In 1864, the German deaconesses founded a boarding school in Beirut that educated the sons and daughters of foreign diplomats and businessmen, as well

454 Smith to Anderson (Beirut, June 17, 1851): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (199).

455 Marten, *Attempting to Bring the Gospel Home*, 60 (note 244); Wortabet, *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 358–68.

456 Smith to Young (Beirut, July 21, 1855): ABC 60 (105), (HHL).

457 Zaydan, *Tarajim Mashahir al-Sharq fi l-Qarn at-Tasi' Ashar*, 428; Y. Sarruf, "Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat, 1827–1908," *al-Muqtataf* 30 (1905) and 34 (1909), cited in Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu'assasun li l-Jami'a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 183.

458 Wortabet, "Wasaya al-Shuyukh li l-Shaban," 5.

459 N. N., "Obituary," 70. For more on his sons, see note 263 in this chapter.

460 "Minutes of General Faculty, 1867–1887" (November 6, 1872): AA.2.4.3.

461 Louise Kayser to Julius Disselhoff (Beirut, October 3, 1890): AFKSK AKD 245.

462 Kaminsky, *Innere Mission im Ausland*, 33–34.

as the children of the new Syrian middle class.<sup>463</sup> He remained in close contact with the deaconesses for decades, serving as their general practitioner alongside his work for the Prussian hospital.<sup>464</sup> Wortabet was among the guest speakers at the celebration honoring the deaconesses' twenty-fifth anniversary in Syria.<sup>465</sup> Upon Wortabet's death, the deaconess Sophie Gräff reported that one of his daughters, who had trained in England to become a nurse, had cared for him until the end. His other children had scattered "as far as India."<sup>466</sup> Multiculturalism characterized Wortabet's life. He was born to Armenian and Syrian parents, educated by Americans, and sometime in the early 1870s he became a British citizen.<sup>467</sup> He did not want his children to miss the advantages of Western education. He spent the last decades of his life as a successful doctor in Beirut. Although he gave up a formal connection to his homeland, he nonetheless seemed to retain an emotional one. After his death, the deaconess Sophie Gräff reported: "The funeral, which was also attended by many Muslims, showed what respect the good old gentleman enjoyed, and how nearly the entire city demonstrated its regard and love for him."<sup>468</sup>

In a 1913 ceremony, teachers and former students unveiled the busts of John Wortabet and Cornelius Van Dyck. In his speech, Ya'qub Sarruf (who had been the student and later the colleague of both men) commented on the character of the Syrian with the British passport. While Van Dyck had been drawn towards the East and mastered the Arabic language, Wortabet was drawn to the West, mastering the English language without error.<sup>469</sup> Like Van Dyck, Wortabet sought the truth, although he did not position himself as stridently against the followers of "evil" ("*lam jakun shadīd al-waṭa'hu 'ala ahl al-shir*") as the Americans had done. Van Dyck and Wortabet were alike in many respects: in their scientific precision ("*ilm wa l-tadqīq*"), in their kindness and gentleness ("*al-luṭf wa l-da'a*"), in their love of truth and piety ("*muḥabat al-ḥaq wa khauf Allāh*"), as well as in their good deeds ("*amal al-kheyr*").<sup>470</sup> Regrettably little is known about the relationship between these two mission doctors. Their paths crossed for decades, but there are no personal letters.

463 Hauser, *German Religious Women in Late Ottoman Beirut*, 253 and 259.

464 He ended his house calls to the orphanage in 1920. See John Wortabet to Wilhelm Zoellner (Beirut, December 31, 1902): AFKSK AKD 246.

465 Hedwig Francke to Julius Disselhoff (Beirut, November 29, 1885): AFKSK AKD 243.

466 Sophie Gräff to Bertha Kuhr (Beirut, December 12, 1908): AFKSK AKD 243.

467 D. S., "Biography – Rev. John Wortabet," 4. In 1872, he registered four of his children at the British consulate in Beirut, suggesting that he had taken British citizenship. See the [British] Public Record Office: FO 615/5, cited in Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 259 (note 209). In the minutes of the Anglo-American Congregation, he was listed as the English representative in the pastor's committee: "Minutes of the Meeting of the Anglo-American Congregational Committee held 30 March 1871," in AAC minutes (1868–1891), 19: NEST/SC.

468 Sophie Gräff to Bertha Kuhr (Beirut, December 12, 1908): AFKSK AKD 243.

469 Sarruf in: N. N., "Tamdhala al-Marhumeyn al-Duktur Fan Dayk wa l-Duktur Wurtabat," cited in Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu'assasun li l-Jami'a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 178.

470 *Ibid.*, 179.

In a 1938 article about John Wortabet in *Al-Kulliyah*, the journal of the American University of Beirut, the author expressed his regret that so little information was available about one of the SPC's most important founding fathers.<sup>471</sup> Before his death, Wortabet vehemently opposed Ya'qub Sarruf or another former student writing his biography.<sup>472</sup> John Wortabet, the first Syrian Protestant pastor, remains a quiet presence in the history of the Syria Mission.

471 D. S., "Biography – Rev. John Wortabet," 4.

472 Y. Sarruf, "Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat, 1827–1908," *al-Muqtataf* 30 (1905) and 34 (1909), cited in Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu'assasun li l-Jami'a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut* 183.

## CONCLUSION

### HUMAN INTERACTIONS AS A FOCUS OF MODERN MISSION HISTORY

I do not desire they should become English in their [Roman Catholic] religion; no, nor do I desire this of you; but I desire that both you and they, and all the inhabitants of the earth, should become true and sincere Christians, according to the Gospel of our adorable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Jonas King, an American missionary stationed in Syria, wrote these words in 1825. His text, which was reprinted by the American Mission Press in 1860, was the mission's first written statement that contrasted its own confessional positions with those of the local Christian churches.<sup>2</sup> For forty-seven years, the ABCFM directed all of its missionary and civilizing efforts in Syria towards reaching the goal that had been enunciated by King.

This study has thoroughly depicted the Americans' influence on processes of cultural transformation in the Levant.<sup>3</sup> In the end, there were around one thousand male and female converts who, as "true and sincere Christians," helped to build the Syrian Protestant church. In Lebanon and Syria today, Protestant Christians are a well-established part of the region's religious diversity. If one takes into consideration all of the Protestant missions (American, English, Irish, Scottish, Dutch, and German), by the turn of the twentieth century there were 395 native congregations in the Middle East, including 34,606 congregation members and 94,428 supporters, 975 elementary and secondary schools, 15 colleges with 64,000 students, as well as 49 hospitals and 63 clinics that treated around 650,000 patients.<sup>4</sup> The missions' influence can be measured not only in numbers, but also in their effects on everyday life. Discipline in the new schools adhered to Western standards, and these schools introduced new teaching methods, materials, and subjects of instruction. Missionary wives served as role models for the well-organized Protestant household. Children in the schools confronted new value systems that blended or clashed with the

1 MH 24 (1826), in: ROS 2, 38.

2 Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, 860; Badr, "Mission to 'Nominal Christians,'" 97; Roper, "The Beginnings of Arabic Printing by the ABCFM," 53 and 56. As 'ad al-Shidyaq, one of the first converts (see appendix II, no. 60) translated the text into Arabic under the title *Wida' Yunus Kin ila Ahbabih fi Filastin wa Suriyya* (Jonas King's Departure from his Friends in Palestine and Syria).

3 Matthews and Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries of the Near East*, 407: "Lebanon has the highest rate of literacy among the Arab states. . . . The second remarkable fact is that this comparatively advanced stage has been accomplished largely through the efforts of private and foreign schools rather than through publicly supported schools."

4 Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 79–80.

traditional views of their parents at home. Natives and Americans alike frowned upon the “Europeanization” of Syrians who dressed in a Western style and hardly spoke Arabic. The Arabic language changed, becoming more flexible and easier to use, and central to written media. Arab identity and the sense of being Syrian, not just a part of the Ottoman Empire, assumed ever greater prominence.<sup>5</sup>

From the perspective of today’s interdisciplinary missionary studies, generalizations are insufficient for analyzing the Syria Mission of the ABCFM and its cultural work. Human interactions and reactions are at the center of missionary work. Thus, contemporary research in mission history has increasingly focused on individual missionaries and native converts, whose biographies should not be forgotten. In this study, this approach has allowed me to present a clearer picture of the Syria Mission, with all of its structural and theological problems.

Serving in Ottoman Syria brought ABCFM missionaries many opportunities for personal and professional development, an effect that was bolstered by the expectation that missionaries would leave their homeland behind them. Eli Smith – reserved, sensitive, hardworking, open to compromise, but also ambitious – was hired for his extraordinary linguistic talents. Through his work, Arabic book printing became one of the Syria Mission’s most important tools. While serving as a missionary, Smith discovered his love for the Arabic language, devoting more time to it than the ABCFM and many of his colleagues in Syria approved of. Everything that he did had to be executed to perfection. Smith mediated successfully between cultures; he became a mentor and friend to many Syrians.

Cornelius Van Dyck had a broad and well-rounded education. Raised to be a doctor, he was spirited and self-assured. In the early years of the Syria Mission, it was evident that he had not yet found his own path. He attempted to work as both a theologian and as a scientist, although he came to recognize that combining faithful piety and free, rational thought within the mission was nearly impossible. He was most at home in his study, and observing the stars through a telescope on the roof of his house became a true refuge. He found his passion in identifying the connections between Western thought and scientific Arabic literature of past centuries. His own personality represented the merging of different cultures. Early in his career, he began to wear traditional Syrian clothing on certain occasions. He smoked a water pipe, and he freely recited Arabic rhymes and proverbs. By the end of his life, Syria had become his true home, and Syrians said: “He is one of us.”<sup>6</sup>

While the ABCFM’s conception of cultural cooperation and dialogue was premised upon a millennial worldview and the attempt to save as many souls as possible by spreading the Christian gospel, Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck had a personal interest in cultural dialogue. In their own ways, each developed what today one might call cultural sensitivity.<sup>7</sup>

5 Sharkey, introduction to *American Missionaries and the Middle East*, xiii and xx; Faris, “Amirika wa l-Nahda al-‘Arabiyya al-Haditha,” 388.

6 Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 107.

7 Here, Habib Badr adopts a generalizing perspective. He argues that the missionaries remained culturally insensitive, unable to escape the confines of their ideology and responsibilities to the ABCFM. (“Mission to ‘Nominal Christians,’” 308–9).

This study has also traced the individual development of Butrus al-Bustani and John Wortabet within the context of the Syria Mission. Their foreign contacts allowed them to view their own society from the perspective of an outsider, without having to renounce their own identities. As I demonstrate, they became indigenous cultural brokers.<sup>8</sup> Bustani and Wortabet were well-educated, strong-minded, and self-aware – characteristics that were only enhanced through their cooperation with the mission. Both men were willing to determine their own futures as Protestant Christians, even when this meant distancing themselves from the American mission. Only then were they able to pursue independent and highly successful careers. In their later writings, they praised their fruitful encounter with the missionaries, and the missionaries' activism, but they also criticized some of the mission's theological standpoints. By emphasizing individual thought and the development of one's own personality within the community of faith, Protestantism promoted individualism and subjectivity<sup>9</sup> – unfamiliar concepts in Arab society, with its traditional focus on family and community. Acceptance within the Syrian Protestant community meant looking backward to a personal experience of religious rebirth, building an individual relationship to God, and personally grappling with the Holy Scripture.<sup>10</sup> Protestant schools emphasized the individual pursuit of knowledge and forming one's own opinion about various issues.

The biographies of both Syrian men were deeply affected by these influences. Bustani belonged to the first generation of Syrian Protestants, who grew up in another religious and social context and attended native schools. Wortabet, by contrast, belonged to the second generation; he was born into the Protestant community. Bustani assumed a key position within the *nahḍa*, Syria's cultural awakening, by skillfully adopting the medium of print, which he had come to know well through the mission. Like Smith and Van Dyck, Bustani was concerned about the progress of Arab society and culture, although his motivations included love for homeland (*ḥubb al-waṭan*), in addition to the true Christian faith. To borrow Anderson's terminology, Bustani was never "denationalized." Several years after his position at the American consulate had ended, he had to return a certificate that had granted him special legal protections. In an article in *al-Janna*, Bustani expressed his relief in handing back the document, explaining that he did not want to live as a foreigner within his own country.<sup>11</sup>

Wortabet's case was different. The early death of his father, and his exposure to Western educational ideals from childhood on, may have contributed to the lesser sense of connection that he felt to his homeland compared to Bustani. As a Syrian Protestant, he soon recognized that he would never become a successful doctor and missionary whom foreign colleagues treated as their equal. Although he received the same education, fulfilled the same responsibilities, and spoke English and Arabic fluently, he did not enjoy the same status, or the same pay and independence.

8 Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 79.

9 Wu, "Narratives of Conversion," 80–81.

10 Womack and Lindner, "'Pick up the pearls of knowledge,'" 143.

11 "La yarḡub fī an yakūn ajnabīyan fī waṭanihi," as cited by Daya ("Al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustani 125 'Aman 'ala Wafātihi") from an imprecisely dated article in *al-Janna*.

Despite his positive experience with the Scottish mission in Aleppo, in the 1870s he chose to become a British citizen. After he returned to Beirut in 1867, he did not become a member of the native Beirut Church, but rather the Anglo-American Congregation. As a British reverend, he was active in the “pastor’s committee” of the congregation. The American Mission Press’s anniversary publication from 1922 listed him as a foreign translator, alongside Van Dyck, Jessup, and many others.<sup>12</sup> Wortabet brought together many different cultural influences; he never expressed a clear attachment to one homeland.

American missionaries’ initial contact with Syrian culture had an enduring influence on American-Arab relations. The outstanding work of Smith, Van Dyck, and others was among the missionaries’ positive achievements. Not least because of the dominance of the pious Protestant outlook towards the “uncivilized” world, American mission work was a balancing act between cultural imperialism and cultural exchange. There was never an unrestricted give-and-take between cultures, since one of the cultures held a position of superiority from the very beginning. Missions of the nineteenth century sought to “equalize” faith, but they did not promote equal treatment in all secular affairs. Maintenance of the social hierarchy justified the ongoing necessity of missions. Successful, professionally independent converts undermined missionary authority.<sup>13</sup> If a Syrian Protestant achieved success in a secular profession, the loss of his faith through external influences was a constant concern.<sup>14</sup> Van Dyck and Smith showed that these views were not held by all missionaries. After years of working together with native helpers, they arrived at a different conclusion. On one hand, their writings and achievements led to a turning point in American thought about the Arab world,<sup>15</sup> so that cooperation and friendships between missionaries and the native population were no longer unusual.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, it took decades – well into the twentieth century – before American missionaries recognized Syrian Protestants’ calls for self-administration and equal treatment.<sup>17</sup>

Intercultural contacts should be considered from a broader vantage point. In global historical context, the missionaries made a valuable contribution to the ex-

12 “Minutes of the Meeting of the Anglo-American Congregational Committee held 30 March 1871,” in: AAC minutes (1868–1891), 19; NEST/SC; PBCFM, *Centennial of the American Press*, 42.

13 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 87.

14 As in the case of Antonius Yanni, a consular agent for the Americans in Tripoli (see appendix II, no. 73), or John Wortabet, who interrupted his theological studies to work as a doctor in Tripoli at the end of the 1840s.

15 Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 47.

16 Bonk, *The Theory and Practice of Missionary Identification*, 44; McGilvary, *Story of Our Syria Mission*, 18: “The American Mission could never have been what it is were there not men like [Assad Kheirallah] and his predecessors. . . . Such men as Assad Kheirallah, and the pioneers of the Protestant faith in Syria are the most brilliant examples of what a liberal and tolerant religious education can accomplish with such gifted and plastic materials as the Syrian race.”

17 Deanna Ferree Womack explores these issues thoroughly in her dissertation, analyzing previously neglected sources from the Syria Mission from around the turn of the twentieth century (“Conversion, Controversy, and Cultural Production,” 98–160).

panding exchange of cultural assets and the accompanying process of globalization.<sup>18</sup> Missions' role in the networking of institutionalized knowledge has become an important theme of intercultural theology, with abundant possibilities for further investigations. From today's perspective, Anderson's call to hinder the "denationalization" of natives – although it led to contradictions within the Syria Mission – is a good start for intercultural dialogue. Sharing cultural assets without alienating others from their own heritage, is, in my estimation, the most important foundation of intercultural cooperation.

18 Holtwick, "Licht und Schatten," 247. See also Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism," 320.

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## APPENDIX I

### LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS BY SMITH, VAN DYCK, BUSTANI, AND WORTABET FOR THE AMERICAN MISSION PRESS<sup>1</sup>

- T = Translation from English  
? = Authorship is uncertain  
E = Editor  
C = Composite of different English- and/or Arabic-language works

#### 1. BUTRUS AL-BUSTANI

##### a) Theological works

- *Rihanat al-Nufus fi Asl al-I'tiqadat wa l-Taqus* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(On the Fundamentals of Rites and Ceremonies for the Comfort of Souls,  
from the *History of Rites and Ceremonies* by B. Schneider)

Beirut, 1854 (180 pp.)

Both Nasif al-Yaziji and Eli Smith proofread this translation. This translation, like the others that follow, was likely the work of multiple contributors who are not named in the sources of the ABCFM.

*References:* Smith to Anderson (Beirut, March 13, 1856): ABC 60 (105), (HHL); PBCFM (1896), 54 (no. 302).

- *Kitab Tarikh al-Fida* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(*A History of the Work of Redemption*, by Jonathan Edwards)

Beirut, 1868 (403 pp.)

The book is divided into three parts: 1. From the fall to the incarnation, 2. From Christ's incarnation to his resurrection, 3. From Christ's resurrection to the end of the world.

The text is characterized by anti-Catholic sentiment.

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 1, 502; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 46 (no. 266); Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 484; Murre-van den Berg, ““Simply by giving to them macaroni ...,”” 74.

1 Many of these texts, some in manuscript form, can be found in the NEST Special Collections.

## b) Schoolbooks

– *Kitab Siyahat al-Masihi* <sup>(T)</sup>

(*The Pilgrim's Progress*, by John Bunyan, 1684)

Beirut, 1844, <sup>2</sup>1859 (537 pp.)

The book is among the classics of English-language religious literature. The Christian allegory is divided in two parts and was frequently taught in schools. There is contradictory information about this translation. Although al-Bustani is credited as translator, Anderson reported that the first part was translated by Cornelius Van Dyck. Both parts were completed in 1859 with funds from the American Tract Society.

*References:* Rufus Anderson, “Memorandum of Discussions with the Missionaries during my visit to the Levant in 1843–1844”: ABC 30.10, Vol. 8, 8 (HHL); PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 58 (nos. 327–30); Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-‘Arabiyya*, 90.

– *Kashaf al-Hijab fi ‘Ilm al-Hisab* <sup>(C)</sup>

(Removing the Veil from the Science of Arithmetic)

Beirut, 1848 (317 pp.), <sup>2</sup>1859, <sup>3</sup>1879, et al. (414 pp.)

With Van Dyck’s assistance, the textbook was completed for use at the ‘Abeih seminary. It was based upon materials that had been collected by Eli Smith. In 1855, the missionaries expressed regret that the book was so rarely used because of its length.

*References:* ABCFM, Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Syrian Mission, 28; Sarruf and Nimr, “al-Marhum al-Mu‘allim Butrus al-Bustani,” 2; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 33 (no. 174); Jandora, “Buṭrus al-Bustānī,” 24.

– *Ilaj Mufid li l-Hawa’ al-Asfar al-Muhid* <sup>(T)</sup>

(A Useful Treatment of the Fatal Cholera, by Azariah Smith)

Beirut, 1848 (10 pp.)

Azariah Smith was an ABCFM mission doctor in Smyrna and Aintab, where he treated cholera successfully. It is not known whether Smith’s work was published in English. The Arabic translation was likely based on an unpublished paper.

*References:* ABCFM, Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Syrian Mission, 28; Sarruf and Nimr, “al-Marhum al-Mu‘allim Butrus al-Bustani,” 2; Jandora, “Buṭrus al-Bustānī,” 24; Auji, “Between Script and Print,” 120.

– *Kitab Misbah al-Talib fi bahth al-Matalib*

(Key for Students to Investigate Problems)

Beirut, 1854 (425 pp.)

The book is a revision of *Kitab Bahth al-Matalib wa Hath al-Talib*, written by the Maronite prelate Jibril Farhat al-Halabi (later Germanus Farhat, Archbishop of Aleppo). It was first published by the Propaganda Fide in Rome in 1836. Bustani did not, however, credit this earlier publication. His grammar book contains around

ten additional pages on prosody that were written by Nasif al-Yaziji. Although the book was intended for use in the mission schools, it does not contain any Bible verses. The introduction even cites from the Koran. An additional manuscript, entitled *Bulugh al-‘Arab fi Nahu al-‘Arab*, is an adaptation of the grammar book that includes Bustani’s teaching notes.

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 1, 429; Tibawi, “The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani,” 160–61; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 144 (note 3).

- *Kitab Miftah al-Misbah fi Usul al-Sarf wa l-Nahu li l-Mubtadi’ in Ta’alif* (Key to Illumination. Fundamentals of Inflection and Grammar for Beginning Writers)

Beirut, 1862 (361 pp.)

A shorter version, likewise from 1862, is 144 pp. The book was presumably used in the *Madrasa Wataniyya*. It is a simplified version of the 1854 grammar book (see above).

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 1, 430; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 30 (no. 143); Sarkis, *Mu’ajam al-Matbu’at al-‘Arabiyya wa l-Mu’araba*, 559; Tibawi, “The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani,” 170.

c) Other

- *Raudat al-Tajir fi Mabadi’ Mask al-Dafatir* <sup>(C)</sup>  
(The Merchant’s Garden. Introduction to Bookkeeping)

Beirut, 1851

The volume was most likely based upon materials collected by Eli Smith.

*References:* Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 144 (note 3); Jandora, “Butrus al-Bustānī,” 24.

- *Al-Juz’ al-Awwal min A’mal fi Jam’iyyat al-Suriyya li l-‘Ulum wa l-Funun* <sup>(E)</sup>  
(First Volume of Documents from the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences)

Beirut, 1852

Bustani planned to bring out two volumes of selected speeches, but only the first was published.

*References:* Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 144 (note 3); Khuri, *A’mal al-Jam’iyya al-Suriyya li l-‘Ulum wa l-Funun*; Glaß, *Der Muqtataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 2, 683.

- *Akhbar al-A’yan fi Jabal Lubnan* <sup>(E)</sup>  
(Reports on important persons in Lebanon, by Tannus Ibn Yusuf al-Shidyaq)

Beirut, 1855 (vol. 1) / 1856 (vol. 2), <sup>2</sup>1859, <sup>3</sup>1863 (44 pp.)

Eli Smith wrote to the DMG on June 11, 1855: “Tannûs Šidiâk rewrote and expanded his *History of Lebanon*, and Mr. Bistâny ... has just had it published by our press. We have not assumed any responsibility for the accuracy of the work itself.” The book depicted topics such as ancient times, Alexander the Great, and the history of Jerusalem and Mount Lebanon.

*References:* ZDMG 10 (1856), 303; Smith to the DMG (Beirut, May 9, 1856), in *ibid.*, 813; Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 1, 429; *ibid.*, vol. 2, 668.

- *Khutba fi Adab al-‘Arab*  
(A Speech on Arab Culture)

Beirut, 1859

Bustani delivered this speech on February 15, 1852 to an audience of foreigners (*ifranj*) and Arabs (*abnâ’ al-‘arab*).

*References:* Bustani, *Khutba fi Adab al-‘Arab*; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 148.

- *Qissat As‘ad Shidyâq*  
(The history of As‘ad Shidyâq)

Beirut, 1860 (130 pp.)

As‘ad Shidyâq was the first Protestant who was imprisoned for his faith by the Maronite patriarch. He died in 1830, presumably from torture and starvation. Although the missionaries stylized him as a martyr, Bustani wanted Shidyâq’s story to promote ecumenism and liberal pluralism.

*References:* Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 148; Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 181.

- *Kitaba ila l-Nisa’ fi Bilad al-Sharq*  
(Letter to the Women of the Near East)

Beirut, 1860

*References:* Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 148.

- *Diwan al-Tayyib Ahmad Ibn al-Husayn al-Mutanabbi* <sup>(E)</sup>  
(The Magnificent Diwan of Ahmad Ibn al-Husayn al-Mutanabbi)

Beirut, 1860

Bustani brought out a new, annotated edition of the work by Ahmad Ibn Husayn (who was known as al-Mutanabbi).

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 1, 429; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 144 (note 3).

- *Kitab al-Tuhfa al-Bustaniyya fī l-Asfar al-Kuruziyya, aw, Rihlat Rubinsun Kuruzi* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(Bustani's Masterpiece about the Journeys of Crusoe, or, the Journey of Robinson Crusoe, from *Robinson Crusoe*, by Daniel Defoe, London, 1719)  
[Collaborator: Salim al-Bustani]

Beirut, 1861 (Vols. 1 and 2)

The book had already been translated into Arabic by an anonymous translator and was published on Malta in 1835. Bustani likely collaborated with his son on the new translation. Bustani especially appreciated the social commentary in Defoe's work. The new translation was published in two volumes.

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 27 (nos. 118–20); Jes-sup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 484; Tibawi, "The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College," 170; Jandora, "Buṭrus al-Bustānī," 192.

- *Muhit al-Muhit, ay Qamus Mutawwal li-Lughat al-'Arabiyya*  
(The Breadth of the Ocean. Lexicon of the Arabic Language)

Beirut, 1866–1870 (2308 pp.), 2 vols.

The dictionary was based on the traditional *Qamus* (dictionary) by al-Firuzabadi, but it introduced new scientific terms, neologisms, as well as foreign and slang words. The American Mission Press brought out the first volume (around 1200 pp.). The second volume was published by Bustani's *Matba'at al-Ma'arif*, and later by the American Mission Press as well. For unknown reasons, the American press is not identified as the publisher on the title page of the first volume. New editions were published in Beirut through the 1980s. The dictionary still figures prominently in studies of the Arabic language, both as a reference work and as a subject of study.

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 1, 430; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 40 (nos. 231–232); PBCFM, *Centennial of the American Press*, 13; Tibawi, "The American Missionaries in Beirut and Butrus al-Bustani," 172; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 250; Glaß, "Butrus al-Bustani (1819–1883)," 112 (quote).

- *Qatr al-Muhit*  
(The Diameter of the Ocean)

Beirut, 1879 (2452 pp.)

A condensed edition of the two-volume dictionary *Muhit al-Muhit* (see above).

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 40 (no. 233).

## 2. ELI SMITH

## a) Theological works

- *Kitab al-Bab al-Maftuh fi A'mal al-Ruh* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(The Open Door – The Works of the Holy Spirit)

Beirut, 1843, <sup>2</sup>1863 (256 pp.)

Butrus al-Bustani's contribution to the translation was substantial.

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 2, 633; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 47 (no. 268); Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 284; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 85 (note 3).

- *Kitab al-Mabahith fi Ittiqadat Ba'ad al-Kana'is*  
(Investigations in the Dogmas of Some Churches)

Beirut, 1854 (156 pp.)

This especially concerned the Catholic Church.

*References:* Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 284.

- *Tarnimat li l-'Ibada* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(Hymnal for Worship)  
[Collaborators: B. al-Bustani and N. al-Yaziji]

Beirut, 1852, <sup>2</sup>1857, <sup>3</sup>1872

The Church Missionary Society on Malta published an original version, which was revised by the three authors. The book contained thirty-two hymns, which were incorporated into a new hymnal in 1872.

*References:* 'Abdul-Hai, "A Bibliography of Arabic Translations of English and American Poetry," 121; Krek, "Some Observations on Printing Arabic in America and by Americans abroad," 82 and 86.

(A copy is available in the Andover-Harvard Theological Library)

## b) Schoolbooks

- *Kitab Dalil al-Sawab fi Usul al-Hisab* <sup>(E)</sup>  
(Leading to the Comprehension of the Fundamentals of Arithmetic)

Beirut, 1837 (84 pp.): 1200 copies

The text originated with Ruzuq (or Rizq) al-Barbari, who worked for years as a mission teacher. In 1844, Smith wrote: "Containing only the four ground rules. ... Was used in the Seminary. Too simple." According to Tibawi, Butrus al-Bustani later incorporated the book into his own work on arithmetic (see above). Because of high demand, it was reprinted into the 1890s. A later edition of Smith's book was 120 pages long.

*References:* Smith, “Report of Works Printed at the Missionary Press in Beirut” (1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (28); PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 33 (no. 173); Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 85 (note 3); Glaß, *Malta, Beirut, Leipzig and Beirut Again*, 17 (note 64).

c) Other

- *Majmu‘ Fawa‘id*  
(Collected Useful Lessons)

Beirut, 1851–1856, 6 issues of 16–32 pp., measuring 12.5 × 23 cm

A collection of sermon-like essays, popular scientific articles, and short stories with a Christian moral. Modeled after Christian periodicals.

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 104 (no. 668); Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-‘Arabiyya*, 53–54; Dagher, *Qamus al-Sihafa al-Lubnaniyya*, 252, no. 1550; Khuri, *Mudawwanat Sahafat Lubnan*, 301; Glaß, “Von Mir‘at al-Aḥwāl zu Ṭamarāt al-Funūn,” 35–37.

### 3. CORNELIUS VAN DYCK

a) Theological works

- *Kitab li l-Ta‘lim al-Masihi* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(literally: Instruction for Christians [The Westminster Assembly’s *Shorter Catechism*])

Beirut, 1843 or 1844 (42 pp.)

The catechism contains 107 questions and answers, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord’s Prayer. Van Dyck translated the 1647 catechism, and Smith made additional changes and revisions.

*References:* Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 285; Khuri, *Al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 60; Sabra, *Truth and Service*, 16.

- N. N. <sup>(T)</sup>  
(*Natural Theology; or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity*, by William Paley, New York, 1802)

Beirut, around 1848

This was Van Dyck’s first translation. The book was one of the American Tract Society’s best known publications.

*References:* Records of the Syria Mission I: Minutes for Oct. 2 1848, cited in Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 126.

- *Kashaf al-Abatil fi 'Ibadat al-Suwar wa l-Tamathil*  
(Sermon Exposing the Perversities of Worshipping Images and Statues)

Beirut, 1853, <sup>2</sup>1866, <sup>3</sup>1889 (46 pp.)

The sermon is based upon Exodus 20:4–6 and Revelation 22:9. According to Van Dyck, it was a contradiction in logic for humans to create an image of God if they understood God and God's will.

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 2, 736; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 95 (no. 588); Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 285; Khuri, *Al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 71.

- *Kitab al-'Ahd al-Jadid li-Rabbina wa Mukhallisina Jesu 'a al-Masih* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(The New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ)

Beirut, 1860 (around 500 pp.), 6000 copies

There were no references in the pocket edition. Numerous later editions appeared in different formats, including a vocalized version of the New Testament from 1863, intended particularly for Muslims and for use in schools.

*References:* Laurie, *The Ely Volume*, 496; Sa'di, "Al-Hakim Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck," 42 (figure 5).

- *Al-Sahm al-Tayar wa l-Fakh al-Qarrar li Tauqiyat al-Kurum Mina' al-Tha'alib al-Sighar*  
(Flying Bows and the Definitive Trap for Keeping out Little Foxes)

Beirut, 1864 or 1882 (12 pp.)

This is a sermon on Song of Solomon 2:15. In his sermon, Van Dyck interprets the foxes to be vices such as envy, laziness, and gluttony.

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 2, 736; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 95 (no. 590); Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 166; Khuri, *Al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 73.

- *Al-Kitab al-Muqaddas ay Kutub al-'Ahd al-Qadim wa l-'Ahd al-Jadid. Qad Turjima Hadithan min al-Lugha al-'Ibraniyya wa l-Lugha al-Yunaniyya* <sup>(T, E)</sup>  
(The Holy Scripture: The Old and New Testaments. Newly Translated from Hebrew and Greek.  
[In collaboration with Eli Smith])

Beirut, 1865, <sup>2</sup>1869, <sup>3</sup>1871, <sup>4</sup>1872, <sup>5</sup>1889 (OT: 1534 pp., NT: 509 pp.)

The complete edition was unvocalized, except where the meaning of a word depended on its vocalization. Words that were not in the original text, but were necessary for comprehension, appeared in a smaller font. Unlike the King James Bible of the time, this Bible was divided into paragraphs with subheadings. Thirty-two new editions (around 900,000 copies) were noted through 1910. After 1867, the Arabic Bible was printed in the United States, and also by the British and Foreign

Bible Society, from reusable metal plates. The eighth edition was smaller, without references or chapter headings (OT: 1358 pp., NT: 422 pp.).

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 2, 735; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 77; Thompson, *The Major Arabic Bibles*, 24–25.

Manuscripts of the translation can be found in the NEST archive.

- *Maw‘iza al-Iftikhar bi l-Salib*  
(Sermon on Boasting of the Cross)

Beirut, 1874 (15 pp.)

Van Dyck delivered this sermon to the Beirut scholarly society *Shams al-Birr* (Sun of Goodness). It is based on a verse from Paul’s letter to the churches of Galatia (Galatians 6:14).

- *Al-Bayan fi Qa’idat al-Iman* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(Explanation of the Foundation of Faith)

Beirut, 1877 (239 pp.)

This is a translation of the English-language book *The Rule of Faith* (author unknown). The translation was serialized in the mission periodical *al-Nashra al-Usubu‘iyya* between 1875 and 1876. The foundation of faith is the Holy Scripture, the truth of which cannot be contested.

*References:* Khuri, *Al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 70.

- *Tarikh al-Islah fi l-Qarn al-Sadis ‘Ashar* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(*History of the Reformation*, by Jean-Henri D’Aubigné, New York, 1869)  
[Collaborator: B. al-Bustani]

Beirut, 1877 (Vol. 1: 758 pp., Vol. 2: 700 pp.)

The two volumes are a compilation of the translated excerpts from D’Aubigné’s work that appeared in the *al-Nashra al-Usubu‘iyya* between 1872 and 1877. Jessup and Tarrazi identified Butrus al-Bustani as translator, although the published volumes only credit Van Dyck. Both men likely worked on the translation.

The work also contains a biography of Luther. A new one-volume edition, edited by Ibrahim al-Haurani, appeared in 1913.

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 106 (no. 256); Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 484; Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-‘Arabiyya*, 90; Khuri, *Al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 69–70; Glaß, “Der Missionar Cornelius van Dyck,” 187.

- *Qissat Bayt Shunbirj wa-Kutta* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(*Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family*, by Elizabeth Rundle Charles, New York, 1864)

Beirut, 1885 (570 pp.)

The translation was serialized in *al-Nashra al-Usubu 'iyya* between 1873 and 1875. The chronicles depicted events during Luther's Reformation. Van Dyck decided to translate this work because of its many parallels to the situation in Ottoman Syria.

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 116 (no. 438); Khuri, *Al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 70–71.

- *Buzugh al-Nur 'ala Ibn Hur* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(*Ben Hur: A Tale of the Christ*, by Lew Wallace, New York, 1890)

[Cairo, 1896 (500 pp.)]; Beirut, 1922 (436 pp.)

This was Van Dyck's last book before his death. Ya'qub Sarruf and Faris Nimr published his translation posthumously in the *Muqtataf* press in Cairo. The author, Lew Wallace, was the American ambassador in Istanbul between 1881 and 1885. As an atheist, he originally sought to disprove the existence of Jesus Christ through this book, although he did not succeed and eventually embraced the Christian faith.

*References:* Sarruf and Nimr, "al-Marhum al-Mu'allim Butrus al-Bustani," 1; Jes-sup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 109; Khuri, *Al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 72–73.

- *Usul al-Iman al-Masihi*  
(Foundations of the Christian Faith)

Beirut, undated (80 pp.)

*References:* Khuri, *Al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 69.

## b) Schoolbooks

- *Kitab al-Mir'at al-Wadiyya fi l-Kurat al-Ardiyya*  
(literally: "The Clear Mirror That Reflects the Earth," or "A Clarification of Geography")

Beirut, 1852, <sup>2</sup>1870, [<sup>3</sup>1872] (502 pp.)

The title showed that Van Dyck wanted to dispel false information about the geography of the earth. He probably wrote the book with Bustani's assistance for his geography course at the 'Abeih seminary. Because of its length, it was hardly used at the mission seminary. Nevertheless, it was the first modern textbook in Syria and became a standard work. Fakhar al-Din Ibn al-Qasim Gulpaigani translated the book into Persian (Bombay, undated). Van Dyck dedicated the third edition to the Damascus historian and Protestant convert Mikha'il Mishaqa. It was published by the *Matba'a al-Adabiyya*, founded by Khalil Sarkis, in 1872.

*References:* ABCFM, Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Syrian Mission, 28; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 32 (no. 163); Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 389–92; Sa’ di, “Al-Hakîm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 40 (figures 1 and 2); Glaß, “Der Missionar Cornelius van Dyck, 188; Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 201.

- *Kitab al-Rauda al-Zahriyya fi l-Usul al-Jabriyya* <sup>(C)</sup>  
(The Flower Garden. Fundamentals of Algebra)

Beirut 1853 (251 pp.), <sup>2</sup>1877, <sup>3</sup>1891 (264 pp.)

In this book, Van Dyck brought together the work of English, American, and French scholars. Van Dyck believed that algebra was the foundation of all natural sciences.

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 33 (no. 176); Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 392–94; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 148 (note 2); Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 200.

- *Muhit al-Da’ira fi ‘Ilmi al-‘Urud wa l-Qafiyya*  
(The Breadth of Scholarship on Meter and Rhyme)

Beirut, 1857 (123 pp.)

Van Dyck completed the manuscript in 1849, but the book was published eight years later. The book, which was intended for elementary schools, contains simple explanations of different forms of meter.

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 31 (no. 153); Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 396–97; Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu’assasun li l-Jami’a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 210.

- *Kitab fi l-Usul al-Handasiyya wa Huwa Mushtamil ‘ala Kutub Iqlidis al-Sita wa Mudafatin fi Tarbi’ al-Da’ira wa Handasiyya al-Ajsam wa Usul Qiyas al-Muthalathat al-Mustawiyya wa l-Karwiyya – Kutub Iqlidis al-Sita* <sup>(T)</sup>  
Book on the Fundamentals of Geometry: It Includes Euclid’s Six Books, as well as Squaring the Circle, Solid Geometry, and the Fundamentals of Analogy in Simple and Spherical Trigonometry – Euclid’s Six Books)

Beirut 1857, <sup>2</sup>1875, <sup>3</sup>1889 (812 pp.)

Van Dyck’s translation from English has eleven chapters, six of which are dedicated to the books of Euclid. The others treat subjects such as squaring the circle, solid geometry, and trigonometry. The book is structured like *The Fundamentals of Algebra* (see above), with each rule defined and explained by an example. Van Dyck completed the manuscript in Sidon.

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 2, 735; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 33 (no. 178); Sa’ di, “Al-Hakîm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 41 (figure 4); Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 394–95.

- *Usul al-Kimiya*  
(The Fundamentals of Chemistry)

Beirut, 1869 (412 pp.)

Considered the first modern college textbook in Syria, it became a standard work. It consisted of four parts (1. The weight of elements that cannot be measured; 2. The naming of chemicals; 3. The chemistry of elements in combination [with others]; The chemistry of unbonded elements). Van Dyck paid for the printing himself.

*References:* Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 397–98; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 185; Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu’assasun li l-Jami’a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 210.

- *Kitab fi l-Jadari wa l-Hasba li l-Razi* <sup>(E)</sup>  
(Al-Razi on Smallpox and Measles)

Beirut, 1872/73 (112 pp.)

Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Zakariya al-Razi lived from 850 to around 932 CE. Van Dyck obtained a copy of the original manuscript in Venice. His new, annotated edition work included an additional chapter on the modern understanding of these illnesses. Van Dyck asked the SPC’s Board of Managers for permission to publish the work because he held it in such high regard. The cost of printing was covered by the Syrian Improvements Committee.

*References:* SPC annual report (June 27, 1872): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 25; Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 398–400; Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu’assasun li l-Jami’a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 210; Sa’ di, “Al-Hakîm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 31; Glaß, *Der Muqtataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 200.

- *Kitab fi Lugharidhmat ay al-Ansab wa fi Masaha al Muthalathat al-Musta-wiyya wa Masaha al-Sutuh wa l-Ajsam wa Masaha al-Ardi wa l-Silk al-Jar wa ‘Ibarat li-Masaha al-Muthalathat al-Kurawiyya bi-Wasatat al-Ansab*  
(Part 1: Book on all kinds of logarithms, the area of an equilateral triangle, the area of a plane and the surface of a solid, the surface of the Earth and subtraction, determining the surface of a sphere through the use of proportions)
- *Jadawil Ansab al-Juyub wa l-Mumasat*  
(Part 2: Logarithm, sine, and tangent tables)

Beirut, 1873 (Part 1: 352 pp.; Part 2: 156 pp.)

Here, Van Dyck used the same specialized terminology as in his *Fundamentals of Algebra* and *Fundamentals of Geometry* (see above).

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 33 (no. 179); Sa’ di, “Al-Hakîm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 44 (figures 9 and 10); Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 400–1; Glaß, *Der Muqtataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 200.  
(The manuscript can be found in the NEST archive. See Ms AP-23)

- *Usul al-Tashkhis al-Tabi`i*  
(Fundamentals of Physical Diagnosis)

Beirut, 1874 (128 pp.)

Van Dyck drew his medical terminology, including the names of body parts, from classical Arabic works on medicine. The book was intended for medical courses at the SPC.

*References:* Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 403–5; Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu`assasun li l-Jami`a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 210; Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 200.

- *Usul `Ilm al-Hai`a*  
(Fundamentals of Astronomy)

Beirut, 1874 (288 pp.)

This work, intended for courses at the SPC, represented the most up-to-date knowledge in the field. Van Dyck used Arabic names for the planets that had been known for centuries, and transliterations for more recent discoveries (such as Neptune in 1859). In the introduction, he emphasized that whereas astronomy had originally been concerned only with the stars, for centuries the Arabs had understood *ilm al-hai`a* to be the study of heavenly bodies as well as Earth.

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 38 (no. 209); Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 402–3; Sa`di, “Al-Hakîm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 45 (figure 11); Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu`assasun li l-Jami`a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 210; Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 200.

A manuscript entitled *al-Astirunumiyya, ay, `Ilm al-Hay`a*, dating from around 1870, can be found in the NEST archive (AP-22).

- *Mukhtasar Tarikh `Ilm al-Hai`a*  
(A Short History of Astronomy)

Beirut, around 1874 (181 pp.)

This was presumably a shorter version of the *Fundamentals of Astronomy* (see above). It was likewise intended for use at the SPC.

*References:* Sa`di, “Al-Hakîm Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 45 (figure 11); Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 200.

- *Usul al-Bathulujiyya al-Dakhiliyya al-Khasa – ay Mabadi` al-Tibb al-Bas-hari al-Nazari wa `Amali* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(Fundamentals of Internal Pathology – Human Medicine in Theory and Practice)

Beirut, 1877 (1055 pp.)

The book is a translation of F. T. Robert’s textbook, *Theory and Practice of Medicine* (1874). It was intended for use in SPC courses. The Theodore Publication Fund covered the cost of printing.

*References:* SPC annual report (1878): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 46; Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 405–6; Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu`assasun li l-Jami`a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beirut*, 210; Sa`di, “Al-Hakim Cornelius Van Allen Van Dyck,” 43 (figure 8).

- *Kitab al-Nafa`is li-Talamidhat al-Madaris*  
(Treasures for Schoolchildren [or: Chrestomathy])

Beirut, around 1886

This was a school primer, revised by Van Dyck, with literary and scientific texts. “It brought together classical and contemporary Arabic writings. Its appearance resembled the reading books of nineteenth-century European educational associations.”

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 2, 736; Glaß, “Der Missionar Cornelius van Dyck,” 189, 194–95 (quote); Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 200.

- *Al-Alfaz al-`Arabiyya wa l-Falsafa al-Lughawiyya* <sup>(?)</sup>  
(Arabic Pronunciation and Grammar)

Beirut, 1886

The DMG received a copy of this work. It is unclear whether Van Dyck was the author.

*References:* ZDMG 42 (1888), XIII (Register of texts received by the DMG library)

- *Kitab al-Naqsh fi l-Hajar (od. Silsilat od. Majmu`at al-Naqsh fi l-Hajar)*  
(The Inscription on the Stone, or Series/Collections of the Inscription on the Stone)

Beirut, between 1886 und 1889

Each of the eight books in this series introduced a science: 1. Science and Nature (128 pp.); 2. Chemistry (142 pp.); 3. Physics (136 pp.); 4. Geography (102 pp.); 5. Geology (123 pp.); 6. Astronomy (122 pp.); 7. Botany (132 pp.); 8. Logic (112 pp.) The volumes resemble Macmillan and Co.’s nineteenth-century primers on science. They were intended to provide both schoolchildren and older students with a general knowledge of each subject, establishing a foundation for further study. The books built on one another, so reading each volume facilitated comprehension of the next. The books were used in schools and at the SPC. Upon the recommendation of Ya`qub Sarruf, they were successfully adopted in Egyptian schools as well. Y.Q. Khuri (“Kurniliyus Fan Dayk”) notes that all of the volumes were printed by the *Matba`a al-Adabiyya*, although they also appeared in the 1896 catalog of the American press.

*References:* Presbyterian Church in the USA, “Dr. Van Dyck and the Syrians,” 485; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 34 (nos. 180–183); Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 406–15; Khuri, *Al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 107; Glaß, “Der Missionar Cornelius van Dyck,” 188; Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 200–1.

(The NEST archive possesses a draft of the eighth volume [*Mabadi` al-Mantiq*]: see AO-53)

- *Kitab Arwa` al-Zama` min Mahasin al-Qubba al-Zarqa` wa Huwa Bimathabat al-Juz` al-Thani al-`Amali li-Kitab Usul al-Hai`a*  
(Quenching the Thirst for the Beauty of the Heavens – The Second, Practical Part of Fundamentals of Astronomy)

Beirut, 1893 (239 pp.)

Van Dyck wrote this book with the assistance of various English- and Arabic-language works on astronomy. In addition to presenting the latest research, it provides a historical overview of Arab astronomers of past centuries. Van Dyck covered the cost of printing himself.

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 38 (no. 210); `Ajuluni, “Qissat al-Duktur Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 6; Khuri, “Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 415–17; Matar, “al-Duktur Kurniliyus Fan Dayk,” 28.

- *Aqlidis Arba`a Kutub* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(Four Books of Euclid [Geometry])

Beirut, undated. (125 pp.)

Van Dyck presumably completed this translation before the publication of *Fundamentals of Geometry* in 1857 (see above).

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 33 (no. 177).

#### c) Other

- *Al-Nashra Akhbar`an Intishar al-Injil fi Amakin Mukhtalifa* <sup>(E)</sup>  
(News about Spreading the Gospel in Different Locations, 1863 – May 1868)

and

- *al-Nashra al-Shahriyya* <sup>(E)</sup>  
(Monthly Bulletin, June 1868 – January 1871)

and

- *al-Nashra al-Usubu`iyya* <sup>(E)</sup>  
(Weekly Bulletin, January 1871 –)

Beirut, from 1863

The journal was renamed *al-Nashra al-Shahriyya* in 1868, and then *al-Nashra al-Usubu`iyya* in 1871. Its focus was on events and stories related to spreading the message of Christianity. Over time, the journal began to feature other kinds of non-fiction articles as well, although its religious character remained intact. Van Dyck edited the periodical until the end of 1879. Later editors included William Eddy, Samuel Jessup, his brother Henry Harris Jessup, and Ibrahim Haurani. The publication was funded by the London Religious Tract Society.

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 72 (no. 448); Tarrazi, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-‘Arabiyya*, 20–21, 66; PBCFM, *Centennial of the American Press*, 8; Al-Rifa‘i, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-Suriyya*, 89–91; Khuri, *Al-Duktur Kurnilyus Fan Dayk*, 66–69; Glaß, “Von Mir’āt al-Aḥwāl zu Tamarāt al-Funūn,” 41–42.

- *Qamus Inklisi wa ‘Arabi Mutawwal li-Yuhanna Affandi Abkariyus* <sup>(E)</sup>  
(English-Arabic Dictionary, full version by John Abcarius)

Beirut, undated

Van Dyck revised and expanded the dictionary that was first compiled by the Syrian Protestant businessman John Abcarius.

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 40 (no. 227); Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 439, 499.

#### 4. JOHN WORTABET

##### a) Theological works

- *Dalil al-Sawab ila Sidq al-Kitab* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(*A Brief Outline of the Evidences of the Christian Religion*, by Archibald Alexander, New York, 1836)

Beirut, 1851 (247 pp.)

Alexander’s work was presumably an abridged edition of his 1832 book, *The Evidences of the Christian Religion*. Smith mentioned to Anderson that both Van Dyck and Yaziji proofread Wortabet’s translation before the text went to print. The cost of printing was covered by the London Religious Tract Society.

*References:* Smith to Anderson (Beirut, March 13, 1856): ABC 60 (105), (HHL); Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 1, 222; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 61 (no. 347).

- *Kifaf al-Zulam fi Haqiqa al-Salat wa l-Siyam* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(literally: *The Scale of Darkness: On the Truth of Prayer and Fasting*, from *On Prayer and Fasting*, by J. E. Ford)

Beirut, around 1855 (134 pp.)

In a letter to Smith dated March 9, 1855, Wortabet wrote that he had not yet finished translating the manuscript on prayer and fasting that Smith had sent him, “having been so long out of the practice of translating, and indeed of Arabic Composition.”

*References:* ABC 60 (98), (HHL); PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 57 (no. 323).

- *Al-Kanz al-Jalil fi Tafsir al-Injil Mujallad al-Thalith: al-A‘mal wa Rumiyya* <sup>(T)</sup>

The Precious Treasure of Biblical Commentary: Acts of the Apostles and Romans

Beirut, 1868, 2000 copies

In 1878, William Eddy began to produce a comprehensive series of New Testament commentaries. Because Wortabet had already translated commentaries on the Letter to the Hebrews, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Letter to the Romans, these were added to Eddy’s series.

*References:* “Estimate of Books to be printed by the Syria Mission in 1868,” in: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2.; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 47 (no. 271); PBCFM, *Centennial of the American Press*, 8.

- *Kitab al-Khizanat al-Dhahabiyat* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(*Güldenenes Schatz-Kästlein der Kinder Gottes*, by Carl Heinrich von Bogatzky, Halle, 1718)

Beirut, 1870, <sup>2</sup>1897 (379 pp.)

The book contained selections from the Bible, along with lines of poetry and prose for every day.

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 1, 415; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 48 (nos. 275–76).

- *Tafsir al-Risala al-‘Ibraniyya. Manqul ‘an al-Tafasir al-Qadima wa l-Haditha* <sup>(C)</sup>  
(Commentary on Hebrews, Based on Old and New Commentaries)

Beirut, 1875

#### b) Schoolbooks

- *Al-Taudih fi Usul al-Tashrih. Wada‘ahu Jami‘ahu Khidmatan li-Abna’ al-Lugha al-‘Arabiyya Manqulan ‘an Addath al-Kutub al-Ma‘awwil ‘aleyha fi Madaris al-Inklisiyya wa Amirikaniyya Hawayan Jami‘ al-Masa’il allati Tahtaj al-Taliba Khaliyan min al-Ta‘aqid wa l-Ibham Sahl al-Tartib wa l-Fahm wa l-Hafz Mawdahan bi-Thalath Mi’a wa ‘Arba’a Sitin Shaklan*  
(Clarification of the Fundamentals of Anatomy. Written as an aid for native speakers of Arabic [and] drawn from the most recent books that are recognized in English and American schools. It explains all necessary questions for students, clearly and without complications. Simply arranged, easy to bookmark and understand. With 364 explanatory illustrations.

Beirut, 1871 (742 pp.)

This was a textbook for the SPC. The long title underscored Wortabet’s determination always to present his subject in a comprehensible way. The cost of printing was covered by the SPC’s Theodore Publication Fund.

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 36 (no. 195); Zaydan, *Tarajim Mashahir al-Sharq fi l-Qarn at-Tasi‘ Ashar*, 429; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 248; Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu‘assasun li l-Jami‘a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 213; Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 203.

- *Mukhtasar fi A‘da‘ al-Jasad al-Bashari wa Wadha‘ifhi*  
(Overview of the Parts of the Human Body and Their Functions)

Beirut, 1873

This compendium of structural anatomy was written for the SPC. It was later published together with the atlas of anatomy and physiology (see below).

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 2, 770; Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 203.

- *Usul al-Fisyulujiya* <sup>(T, C)</sup>  
(Fundamentals of Physiology)

Beirut, 1877 (563 pp.)

This was a translation of the eighth edition of William S. Kirke’s textbook. Intended for use at the SPC, the work contained many illustrations with explanatory footnotes.

*References:* Ellis, *Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum*, vol. 1, 861; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 35 (no. 194); Zaydan, *Tarajim Mashahir al-Sharq fi l-Qarn at-Tasi‘ Ashar*, 429; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 248; Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu‘assasun li l-Jami‘a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 213; Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 203.

- *Atlas fi l-Tashrih wa l-Fisyulujiya wa Ma‘ahu Mukhtasar fi A‘da‘ al-Jasad al-Bashari wa Wadha‘ifhi* <sup>(T)</sup>  
(*Atlas of Human Anatomy and Physiology*, by William Turner, Edinburgh, 1857)

Beirut, around ca. 1878

Wortabet had presumably read Turner’s textbook in Edinburgh. This illustrated work was used at the SPC.

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 36 (no. 196); Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 248; Khuri, *al-Rawad al-Mu‘assasun li l-Jami‘a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut*, 213; Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 203.

- *Kifayat al-‘Awam fi Hifz al-Sihha wa Tadbir al-Asqam*  
(Hygiene for Staying Healthy and Preventing Disease)

Beirut, 1881 (281 pp.)

This was a collection of helpful suggestions for when a doctor was unavailable. It was intended for a general audience.

*References: PBCFM, Illustrated Catalogue and Price List, 35 (no. 190); Tibawi, American Interests in Syria, 248.*

- *Mabadi` Ilm al-Saha*  
(Fundamentals of Hygiene)

Beirut, undated

Like the aforementioned work, this was presumably an informational text for the general public.)

*References: PBCFM, Illustrated Catalogue and Price List, 35 (no. 188).*

c) Other

- *Qamus `Arabi wa Inkliisi wa Inkliisi wa `Arabi. Muhtasir al-Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat wa l-Duktur Harvey Porter*  
(Arabic-English and English-Arabic Dictionary. Abridged Edition by Dr. John Wortabet and Dr. Harvey Porter)  
[Collaborator: William Thomson Wortabet]

Beirut, undated

John Wortabet worked on the dictionary with his son William Thomson, and with Harvey Porter, professor at the SPC. Henry Wortabet, who was a tutor at the SPC, had previously published an English-Arabic dictionary with his father's assistance.

*References: PBCFM, Illustrated Catalogue and Price List, 40 (no. 228); Penrose, "That they may have life", 38.*

- *Qamus `Arabi wa Inkliisi Tabā`a Thaniyya. Manhaqa wa Mudaf ilayha al-Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat wa l-Duktur Harvey Porter*  
(Arabic-English Dictionary. Complete Second Edition by Dr. John Wortabet and Dr. Harvey Porter)

Beirut, undated (818 pp.)

The work is still published today.

*References: PBCFM, Illustrated Catalogue and Price List, 40 (no. 229).*

- *Wasya al-Shuyukh li l-Shaban. Khitab li l-Duktur Wurtabat Talahu fi l-Hafla al-Sanawiyya al-Madrasa al-Kuliyya*  
(Recommendations from the Old to the Young. A Speech by Dr. Wortabet, Given at the Anniversary of the College's Founding)

Beirut, 1896 (16 pp.)

Wortabet wrote the text together with Harvey Porter.

*References: PBCFM, Illustrated Catalogue and Price List, 103 (no. 665); Khuri, al-Rawad al-Mu`assasun li l-Jami`a al-Amirikiyya bi-Beyrut, 213.*

APPENDIX II

NATIVE HELPERS AND  
PROTESTANT CONVERTS (1823–1900)

N = native helper  
P = Protestant convert

1. ABCARIUS, YUHANNA OR JOHN ABCARIUS († 1886) <sup>(P)</sup>

The son of Ya‘qub Agha Abcarius (no. 2) was educated in an American mission school. As a businessman in Egypt, and translator to the ambassador, he became a wealthy man. He translated many books into Arabic, wrote an English-Arabic dictionary, and served as elder in the Beirut congregation.

*References:* PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*, 40 (no. 227); Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 439 and 499.

2. AGHA ABCARIUS, YA‘QUB <sup>(P)</sup>

Agha worked for the English consul in Sidon, where he came into contact with William Goodell. He introduced Goodell to the Armenian clerics Dionysios Carabet and Gregory Wortabet.

*References:* MH 23 (1827), in: ROS 1, 454; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 35.

3. AL-ASIR (AL-AZHARI), YUSUF (1815–1889) (Sunni) <sup>(N)</sup>

Al-Asir was born in Sidon, and he studied law and Islamic theology at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, later working as an attorney in Tripoli and other locations. After working as an Arabic teacher in Istanbul, he returned to Syria to teach at the *al-Hikma* Maronite school and at Butrus al-Bustani’s National School. He later taught at a Greek Catholic academy and the SPC. After 1857, he worked together with Van Dyck on the Arabic Bible translation, replacing Butrus al-Bustani and Nasif al-Yaziji. He also composed Arabic hymns for the Protestant church. He served as editor of the journal *Lisan al-Hal* (literally: Mute Speech), and after 1875 he published the first Muslim newspaper in Syria, *Thamarat al-Funun* (Fruits of Art), with ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani. Al-Asir was a founding member of the *Jam‘iyat al-Maqasid al-Khayriyya al-Islamiyya* (Islamic Society for Benevolent Purposes, 1878).

*References:* Zaydan, *Tarajim Mashahir al-Sharq fi l-Qarn at-Tasi ‘ Ashar*, 148–50; Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, 463; Tibawi, “The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College,” 277; Atiyeh, “The Book in the Modern Arab World,” 240; Kades, *Die arabischen Bibelübersetzungen im 19. Jahrhundert*, 49–50; Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 65; Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced*, 86; Binay, “Revision of the manuscripts of the ‘so-called Smith-Van Dyck Bible,’” 82.

#### 4. AL-AYITANI, KAMIL († 1892) <sup>(P)</sup>

As a boy, al-Ayitani attended a Jesuit school so that he could learn Greek. At school, he encountered the Bible for the first time. Against the will of his father, he learned more about Christian teachings and got to know Henry Harris Jessup. After converting, he served with the American Reformed church’s Arabian Mission in Syrian Bosra. He died in June 1892, only two years after his conversion. It is presumed that he was poisoned, although no autopsy was performed. He was buried in a Muslim cemetery.

*References:* Jessup, *The Setting of the Crescent*; *ibid.*, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 553.

#### 5. AZAR, YUSUF (Greek Orthodox) <sup>(N)</sup>

When many Druzes from Beit al-Witwat appealed to the mission in 1840, the Americans opened a school there and hired Yusuf Azar.

*References:* Van Dyck, “Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission,” 6.

#### 6. AZAR, ALLAH (confession unknown) <sup>(N)</sup>

Azar was hired to assist at the American Mission Press in 1840.

*References:* Van Dyck, “Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission,” 13.

#### 7. ‘ABDALLAH, AS‘AD <sup>(N, P)</sup>

He was ordained as pastor of the congregation in ‘Ain Zhalta on September 30, 1891.

*References:* Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 577.

#### 8. ‘ABUD, DAHER <sup>(N, P)</sup>

‘Abud, who worked as a teacher for the mission in Ibl, was introduced to Christianity by the convert Tannus Karem. He resigned from his teaching post after discovering a passion for preaching and missionizing. He and the Protestant Ya‘qub

al-Hakim were sent to Qana, and also to the Hauran and east of the Jordan. Both men had trained as doctors. 'Abud later studied at the 'Abeih seminary. He was to have been ordained in 1857/58, although whether this happened can no longer be confirmed.

*References:* MH 47 (1851), in: ROS 4, 147; "Report of the Hasbeiya station for the year 1853": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (167); Van Dyck to Anderson (Sidon, April 23, 1857): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5, no. 343; Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 2, 336.

#### 9. 'ARAMAN, MIKHA'IL <sup>(N, P)</sup>

'Araman attended the boys' boarding school in Beirut. In 1840 he accompanied the missionaries to Jerusalem, assisting them as an Arabic teacher. When Butrus al-Bustani left the 'Abeih seminary, 'Araman took over his teaching post. In 1847, he joined the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences. Between 1847 and 1848, he distanced himself from the Protestant faith. He later worked for the Irish mission in Damascus and then converted back to Protestantism. After the founding of the native church in Beirut in 1848, he was briefly considered as a candidate for pastoral office, but he was deemed too young and inexperienced. In 1858, he founded a private girls' school, which received financial support from the mission and was later staffed by American and English nationals. "He is, as we think, decidedly pious, and exhibits more of the experimental in religion than most of our native brethren." Around 1873, he taught English for two hours a week at the SPC. Bliss was dissatisfied with 'Araman's teaching, however, and his contract with the college ended in April 1874.

*References:* Van Dyck, "Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission," 8; Syria Mission to Anderson (Beirut, March 20, 1848): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 4.1. (21); MH 46 (1850), in: ROS 4, 112 (quote); MH 63 (1867), in: ROS 5, 172; "Minutes of General Faculty 1867–1887" (April 13, 1874), 191: AA.2.4.2.; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 163; Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 18; Badr, "Mission to 'Nominal Christians,'" 291 and 294; Daniel Bliss to Abby Bliss (Beirut, October 19, 1873), in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 98.

#### 10. 'ARAMAN, LULU <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Married to Mikha'il 'Araman (no. 9), she was a founding member of the Protestant church in Beirut in 1848. She was raised by the De Forest family and attended their school for girls. Between 1861 and 1869, she and her husband directed a girls' boarding school that received support from the mission.

*References:* MH 63 (1867), in: ROS 5, 172; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 672.

11. 'ATA, MUSA (originally Catholic) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

'Ata began to help with the press in 1840/41. Before 1870, he was the only convert in Zahle, where the mission only became more active after its handover to the PBCFM. He was the father of Rahil 'Ata (no. 12), the wife of Butrus al-Bustani (no. 20).

*References:* Van Dyck, "Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission," 13; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 155; Lindner, "Syrian Protestant Families."

12. 'ATA AL-BUSTANI, RAHIL (1826–1894) (originally Greek Orthodox) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

In the mid-1830s, Rahil attended the girls' school led by Sarah Smith in Beirut. Sarah, the wife of Eli Smith, took the girl in, and she became like an adoptive daughter. After Sarah's early death, Rahil stayed with different missionary families. She worked as a teacher in the mission schools and translated schoolbooks into Arabic. In 1843 she married Butrus al-Bustani (no. 20), and they had nine children. Rahil's influence within the Protestant community, and her involvement in the diverse activities of her husband, cannot be underestimated. She had the privilege of a bilingual upbringing, and also the best education that a Syrian woman of the time could receive.

*References:* MH 39 (1843), in: ROS 3, 381–82; Jessup, *The Women of the Arabs*, 120–39; Booth, "She Herself was the Ultimate Rule," 433–38; Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 93–94; Lindner, "Rahil 'Ata al-Bustani."

13. 'ATIYA, IBRAHIM <sup>(N, P)</sup>

'Atiya worked as a teacher for the American and later British missions in Syria.

*References:* Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 326.

14. BADR, HANNA <sup>(P)</sup>

Hanna was the brother of Yusuf Badr (no. 15), the first native pastor of the Beirut congregation. He initially worked at a stone quarry. After getting to know the American missionaries, he converted to the Protestant faith. He studied in 'Abeih and preached among the Bedouins until his death in 1871.

*References:* Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 324–25 and 327.

15. BADR, YUSUF († 1912) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Badr began his studies at the mission seminary in 'Abeih in 1869. He worked as a teacher in Zahle and 'Abeih, and he later served the mission at the congregation in

Homs. After a long search for a native pastor of the Beirut congregation, in 1890 Badr (who had already been ordained as pastor in 1872) agreed to accept this position. After serving in Beirut, he led congregations in Tyre (Sur) and Marja'yun in the southern part of the country.

*References:* “Annual Report of Beirut Station, 1865”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (39); Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 313; al-Helou, *Muzakirrat al-Mu'allim Nassim al-Helou*, 131.

#### 16. BARAKAT, SHAHIN <sup>(P)</sup>

Barakat was an elder in the Hasbeiya congregation. In the 1860 civil war, he was killed in a massacre during prayers “for the enemy.”

*References:* Bird, *Bible Works in Bible Lands*, 418; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 275.

#### 17. BARBARI, RIZQ (OR RAZUQ) ALLAH († 1886) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Barbari worked for around thirty years as a teacher in 'Abeih and Beirut. He translated and edited many Arabic books for the American press, and he contributed significantly to the development of the mission journal *Akhbar 'an Intishar al-Injil fi Amakin Mukhtalifa* (later *al-Nashra al-Ushbu'iyya*). According to the *Missionary Herald*, he was to be ordained as pastor in the summer of 1862. In 1866, it noted that he was a deacon in 'Abeih. H.H. Jessup wrote that Barbari was too modest to accept the position of pastor at the Beirut Church.

*References:* MH 52 (1856), in: ROS 4, 264, 275, et al.; MH 58 (1862), in: ROS 5, 42; MH 63 (1867), in: ROS 5, 168; PBCFM, *Illustrated Catalogue and Price List*; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 499; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 251; al-Helou, *Muzakirrat al-Mu'allim Nassim al-Helou*, 147.

#### 18. BESHARA (SHEIKH) (confession unknown) <sup>(N)</sup>

Beshara appeared on the 1842 payroll with a salary of three hundred dollars per year, a comparatively high sum for a native helper. His specific job is not known.

*References:* Report to the Prudential Committee (Beirut, April 24, 1842): ABC 16.8.1. Vol. 1 (29).

#### 19. AL-BUHARI, BUSSA <sup>(N, P)</sup>

After Mikha'il 'Araman (no. 9), al-Buhari became the head teacher at the mission seminary in 'Abeih.

*References:* “Abeih Seminary Records”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8.

20. AL-BUSTANI, BUTRUS (originally Maronite) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Born in Dbayye in 1819, al-Bustani attended the Maronite 'Ayn Warqa seminary. After converting to Protestantism in 1839, he began working at the boys' boarding school in Beirut. The missionaries taught him English and the Biblical languages of Greek and Hebrew. He was part of Eli Smith's translation team for the Arabic Bible. He later worked as an interpreter at the American consulate. In 1863, Bustani founded the secular boys' school *al-Madrasa al-Wataniyya*. As the editor of numerous journals and the author of several books and an encyclopedia, he ranks among the most successful scholars of his time.

*References:* Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 326; Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, 462; Laurie, *Historical Sketch of the Syria Mission*, 24 (more in chapter III, section 1).

21. CARABET, DIONYSIOS OR JOHN (originally Armenian Orthodox) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Three years after leaving his monastery, the former archbishop met the missionary William Goodell and became his Turkish teacher. Goodell gave him the Armenian name "Carabet," or "forerunner" ("with the hope, that he may be the *forerunner* of great good to his nation"). Together, Carabet and Goodell translated religious tracts into Turkish. They also worked on a Turkish grammar book in Italian, an Italian-Turkish dictionary, as well as a Bible translation in the Turkish language with Armenian letters. After his wife's early death, Carabet gave two of his daughters into the care of the Whiting family.

*References:* MH 22 (1826), in: ROS 1, 344–49, here: 345 (quote); MH 23 (1827), in: ROS 1, 425–26 and 469; Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 74; Zaydan, *Tarajim Mashahir al-Sharq fi l-Qarn at-Tasi' Ashar*, 424; Kawerau, *Amerika und die Orientalischen Kirchen*, 335; Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 206 and 245; Lindner, "Syrian Protestant Families."

22. FAWAZ, ELYAS <sup>(N, P)</sup>

When the mission retreated to Cyprus during the Greek revolts of 1829/30, Fawaz and Tannus al-Haddad (no. 31) took care of responsibilities in Beirut. Also in 1829, Fawaz worked with Jacob Gregory Wortabet (no. 68) as an evangelist in Sidon. Fawaz was responsible for the mission's storehouse, and he served as the mission's representative and property manager. Along with Butrus al-Bustani, he joined the growing congregation in Hasbeiya in 1843. He married Susan Wortabet (no. 71) after the death of her husband in 1832. He was ordained as a deacon (*shammās*) in 1848, and he went with Tannus al-Haddad to Sidon in 1855. He was an elder of the Beirut congregation and a member of the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences. Fawaz, who had a reputation for a hot temper, broke with the mission twice – presumably for financial reasons – but he eventually returned after settling his debts.

The Beirut Church's council of elders recommended his expulsion from the congregation in 1854.

*References:* Elyas Fawaz and Jacob Gregory Wortabet, "Qissat Shaghal al-Diniya" (Report on religious work): ABC 50, Box 1 (HHL); Van Dyck, "Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission," 6; Wolcott to Anderson (Beirut, June 1, 1842): ABC 16.5, Vol. 3; MH 32 (1836), in: ROS 3, 3–4; MH 47 (1851), in: ROS 4, 120, et al.; Laurie, *Historical Sketch of the Syria Mission*, 25–26; Bird, *Bible Works in Bible Lands*, 403; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 439; NECB minutes (February 9, 1854), 10; Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 18.

### 23. FILBIS, DIMITRIUS <sup>(N, P)</sup>

The son-in-law of Ya'qub Agha was a supervisor at the boys' seminary in Beirut, and he later oversaw the mission's book warehouse. The missionary Samuel Wolcott described him as very obstinate. Filbis and his wife dressed in a Western style early on.

*References:* "Report to the Prudential Committee" (April 24, 1842): ABC 16.8.1. Vol. 1 (29); Wolcott to Anderson (Beirut, June 1, 1842): ABC 16.5., Vol. 3; Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 18.

### 24. GREGORY, RUFKA <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Rufka and her sister Sada were raised by the Whiting family after the deaths of their mother and their father, Ya'qub Gregory (no. 61). Rufka worked in the girls' school founded by Mikha'il 'Araman (no. 9) between 1858 and 1868, before she emigrated to Egypt.

*References:* Van Dyck to N.G. Clark (Beirut, January 25, 1868): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 7.2. (515); Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 236–37 and 273.

### 25. GREGORY, YA'QUB <sup>(P)</sup>

After his death and the death of his wife in 1836, their daughters Rufka (no. 24) and Sada were taken in by the Whiting family.

*References:* Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 236–37 and 273.

### 26. JABUR, SHIM'UN <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Jabur was a teacher at the mission school founded in Kfarshima around 1846.

*References:* Bustani to Smith (March 10, 1846): ABC 50, Box 2; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 25.

27. JARED, YUSUF (confession unknown) <sup>(N)</sup>

According to the 1842 payroll, Jared earned just 160 dollars, suggesting that he held a low-level position (distributing texts, pamphlets, etc.).

*References:* “Report to the Prudential Committee” (Beirut, April 24, 1842): ABC 16.8.1. Vol. 1 (29).

28. JERAWAN, SALIBA <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Jerawan attended the ‘Abeih seminary for four years, and he later worked as a teacher and preacher. He was ordained as pastor in ‘Abeih on May 10, 1864. Beginning in 1865, he was stationed in Homs, and he worked in Bhamdoun after 1869. After John Wortabet (no. 69), he became the second native Protestant to be ordained as pastor.

*References:* “Annual Report of Beirut Station, 1869”: ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6, (39); MH 60 (1864), 250; “A Brief Chronicle of the Syria Mission”: ABC 88, 18–19; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 286.

29. JIMMAL, JIRJIUS <sup>(P)</sup>

Jimmal, who came from Acre, became a member of the Beirut Church in December 1851.

*References:* NECB minutes (December 24, 1851), 7; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 25.

30. AL-HADDAD, BESHARA († 1873) <sup>(P)</sup>

As the son of Tannus al-Haddad (no. 31), the first Syrian mission helper, Beshara was the first Protestant child to be baptized in Syria. He studied in ‘Abeih and taught at Bustani’s National School. Al-Haddad was not known to be particularly religious, until he and Syrian Protestant Elyas Sa’ada (no. 50) experienced a spiritual awakening at the end of the 1860s. He later went to Syrian Latakia for the Presbyterian mission.

*References:* Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 322–23 and 326.

31. AL-HADDAD, TANNUS (originally Greek Orthodox) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

In 1824, al-Haddad was hired as the first native teacher at the mission school in Beirut. He instructed the missionaries Smith, Thomson, and Hebard in the Arabic language. He and Elyas Fawaz (no. 22) watched over the Beirut mission station during the Greek revolts (1829/30). In 1844, the mission decided to use him as

a traveling preacher. In addition, he often accompanied the missionaries on their itineraries through mountain villages. After he was ordained as a deacon in 1848, he and Fawaz went to the newly founded congregation in Sidon in 1855. Between 1847 and 1852 he was a member of the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences.

*References:* MH 23 (1827), in: ROS 2, 471, et al.; N.A. Keyes, “Native Helpers” (1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (21); Van Dyck, “Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission,” 6; Laurie, *Historical Sketch of the Syria Mission*, 17 and 26; Bird, *Bible Works in Bible Lands*, 403; Khuri, *A‘mal al-Jam‘iyya al-Suriyya li l-‘Ulum wa l-Funun*, 18.

### 32. AL-HAKIM, YUSUF (confession unknown) <sup>(N)</sup>

Al-Hakim was a teacher at a girls’ school of the mission.

*References:* ABC 30.10., Vol. 3, pp. 30 and 40.

### 33. HASHIM, BESHARA <sup>(P)</sup>

The Syrian from Hasbeiya became a member of the Beirut Church in 1853.

*References:* NECB minutes (February 17, 1853), 7; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 25.

### 34. AL-HAURANI, IBRAHIM (Greek Catholic) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Al-Haurani was a teacher from Aleppo, and he taught Arabic rhetoric, mathematics, and logic at the SPC. Between 1880 and 1915, he helped significantly with the publication of the mission journal *al-Nashra al-Usubiyya*.

*References:* Glaß, *Der Muqataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 78; al-Helou, *Muzakirrat al-Mu‘allim Nassim al-Helou*, 147.

### 35. AL-KHAYAT, AS‘AD YA‘QUB (originally Greek Catholic) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Al-Khayat learned Italian from the missionaries Bird and Goodell when he was only twelve years old, becoming the Americans’ first student. He later worked for the mission as a teacher and administrator. He was a doctor, businessman, and author (*A Voice from Lebanon*, 1847), and he even served as the British consul in Jaffa between 1847 and 1865.

*References:* Kayat, *A Voice from Lebanon*; Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 39 (note 1).

36. KHEIR ALLAH, AS'AD <sup>(N, P)</sup>

After graduating from the SPC, in the years between 1881 and 1932 he worked as a secretary for the American press in Beirut, and also as a teacher at mission schools in Homs and Zahle. Allah was a longtime member (and also treasurer) of the Beirut Church. He and John Wortabet served on the executive committee of the psychiatric hospital in 'Asfuriya. "He has never refused the delicate and dangerous task of intermediary between the Mission and the Turkish Government. During the recent war he paid for his disregard of personal safety with six months of exile in Anatolia under false charges."

*References:* McGilvary, *Story of Our Syria Mission*, 17–18 (quote); al-Helou, *Muzakirrat al-Mu'allim Nassim al-Helou*, 311.

37. AL-KHURI, KHALIL SABUR (1836–1907; Greek Orthodox) <sup>(N)</sup>

In the 1860s, al-Khuri worked as a teacher at the mission seminary in 'Abeih. He joined the Syrian Scientific Society in 1868. He was the editor of the first indigenous Arabic newspaper in Syria, *Hadiqat al-Akhbar* (1858–1911). Al-Khuri, who was an associate of Butrus al-Bustani, advocated for the unity of the Syrian nation and for a Syrian patriotism. He opposed merely imitating the West, arguing instead that the Middle East should create its own civilized society.

*References:* "Abeih Seminary Records, 1848–1878": ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 8; Jandora, "Buṭrus al-Bustānī," 161; Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-'Ilmiyya al-Suriyya*, 218; Zachs, "Building a Cultural Identity," 27–39.

38. AL-KAREM, TANNUS <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Al-Karem was introduced to Christianity by the Syrian convert Ya'qub al-Hakim. Around 1840, he served as a native helper to the missionary George B. Whiting in Jerusalem. After 1853, he distributed religious literature in his hometown of Safet.

*References:* MH 47 (1851), in: ROS 4, 147; MH 49 (1853), 200; Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 275.

39. LAFLUFTI, NICOLA (Greek Catholic) <sup>(N)</sup>

The mission helper was the father of Joseph (no. 40) and Susan (no. 71), who later married the convert Jacob Gregory Wortabet. Nicola purchased land for the Syria Mission, since foreigners could not own property under Ottoman law.

*References:* Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 275; Lindner, "Syrian Protestant Families."

40. LAFLUFTI, JOSEPH (Protestant or Greek Catholic) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Joseph and his father, Nicola Laffufti (no. 39), helped the missionaries acquire land. In 1826, he became the supervisor of all mission schools, travelling to Hasbeiya and other small towns in order to open schools. The missionaries hoped that he could promote reform within his own church, but he was excommunicated in 1827. He was persecuted because he worked for the mission, and he was on the run for many years. The Americans, however, did not believe in his promise as a believer (“we never saw in him that prudence or that humility and sense of sin which are the necessary indications of a saving faith in the Redeemer”). Without a home or source of income, he felt compelled to return to his original faith. In 1834, it was reported that he had held Bible circles at his house for Greek Catholic priests. It is unclear whether he was officially accepted into the mission church.

*References:* MH 23 (1827), in: ROS 2, 424, 471, 487, et al.; MH 25 (1829), in: ROS 2, 172; MH 28 (1832), in: ROS 2, 301 (quote); MH 30 (1834), in: ROS 2, 358.

41. LATUF, NA‘AMI (originally Maronite) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Latuf was the son of a Maronite sheikh, who was favorably disposed to the Americans. He became a companion to the missionary Isaac Bird and helped him with translations.

*References:* MH 24 (1828), in: ROS 2, 27; MH 25 (1829), in: ROS 2, 13.

42. AL-MA‘ALUF, AS‘AD (originally Greek Catholic) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Al-Ma‘aluf was born into a Greek Catholic family in a small village near Mount Sannine in Mount Lebanon. He was a leader of the Hasbeiya movement, whose members sought to renounce their own faith and turn to Protestantism instead. On his own initiative, al-Ma‘aluf thoroughly studied the Bible and the mission’s religious texts. In 1843, he fled to Beirut. He worked as an agent for the mission and as a teacher in various mission schools.

*References:* MH 40 (1844), in: ROS 3, 397–98; MH 44 (1848), in: ROS 4, 39; see his travel journal in: *ibid.*, 40–45.

43. MAJDALANI, KOSTA <sup>(N, P)</sup>

The Syrian from Hasbeiya studied in ‘Abeih, and then he worked as a teacher in ‘Abeih and Beirut until 1886. In the 1840s, he had taught in a girls’ school alongside the Whiting family’s two Syrian foster daughters.

*References:* Van Dyck to Anderson (‘Abeih, November 9, 1846): ABC 16.8.1, Vol. 5 (315); “A Brief Chronicle of the Syria Mission”: ABC 88, 30 (HHL); Bird, *Bible Works in Bible Lands*, 418; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 25.

44. MAGHBUGHUB, KHALIL <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Maghbughub came from 'Ain Zhalta, where he worked for the mission as a teacher and preacher. He was ordained as a pastor on April 29, 1866.

*References:* MH 58 (1862), in: ROS 5, 38; "A Brief Chronicle of the Syria Mission": ABC 88, 20 (HHL); ABCFM, "Fifty-Eighth Annual Report" (1868), 50.

45. MIKHA'IL, NASIF <sup>(P)</sup>

The Syrian from 'Aitat was among the early members of the Beirut Church. He was said to have worked as an evangelist in the area around Sidon.

*References:* NECB minutes (August 7, 1849), 2; Van Dyck to Anderson ('Abeih, October 21, 1850): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 25.

46. MISHAQA, MIKHA'IL (1800–1888), (originally Greek Catholic) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Mishaqa's family belonged to the well-to-do middle class. For generations, members of his family had engaged in trade and worked in the service of the aristocratic Shihab family, which governed eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Lebanon. After working as a merchant and a tax collector for Amir Bashir II, Mishaqa (who to this point had been mostly self-educated) decided to study medicine with an Italian doctor. He completed his studies in Egypt in 1845, but he could not support himself as a doctor. After meeting the American missionaries Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck, in 1848 he converted to Protestantism and began to work as a missionary and teacher. He was a corresponding member of the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences. In the 1840s, Mishaqa worked as a translator for the British consul in Damascus. Between 1859 and 1870, he served in Damascus as a deputy to the American consul. During the *nahḍa*, he had a formative influence on the genre of autobiography with his own *Mashhad al-Aiyan bi Hawadith Suriyya wa Lubnan* (Eyewitness to the Events in Syria and Lebanon [1908]). He corresponded regularly with Eli Smith, often concerning his disputes with clerics. Henry Harris Jessup called him the Martin Luther of Syria, because of the dangerous circumstances that he faced while writing. Mishaqa was one of Syria's most renowned intellectuals in the second half of the nineteenth century.

*References:* Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 238 and vol. 2, 530; Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 298; Mishaqa, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage and Plunder*, 1, 158, and 235–38; Zachs, "Mīkhā'īl Mishāqa," 69–74; Trauboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 65.

47. NAUFAL, EFFENDI († 1887) <sup>(P)</sup>

Naufal was a high-ranking civil servant in the Beirut customs office and a well-known Arabic author of his day. He became a member of the Beirut Church in 1862. After moving to Tripoli in 1868, he was elected as an elder of his congregation. Five of his books, including works on Arab and religious history, were printed by the Mission Press.

*References:* MH 58 (1862), in: ROS 5, 38; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 430 and 526; PBCFM, *Centennial of the American Press*, 8.

48. NAUFAL, SALIM (1828–1902) <sup>(P)</sup>

In 1847, he became a member of the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences. After spending time in London, in the early 1850s he wanted to publish the first secular bilingual journal with the American press. No known sources explain why his plans were not realized.

*References:* Naufal to Smith (London, August 1, 1851): ABC 50 (HHL); Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria*, 138; Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 18.

49. QASIM, MUHAMMAD (originally Druze) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Qasim reached out to the mission in order to encourage educational reform within his religious community. In 1836, he became the mission's first Muslim convert, even presenting his decision before a Muslim council ("he appeared ready to suffer martyrdom, rather than deny his Lord"). Two years later, he and his wife were baptized and took new first names. Nevertheless, the missionary Samuel Wolcott recalled Qasim's "weak intellect and violent temper," writing that "the hardest cursing that I have received in this country was from him for an alleged offence of my servant."

*References:* Van Dyck, "Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission," 14; MH 35 (1839), in: ROS 3, 154, 157, and 158 (quote); Wolcott to Anderson (Beirut, June 1, 1842): ABC 16.5., Vol. 3; Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 243.

50. SA'ADA, ELYAS († 1902) (originally Greek Orthodox) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

In Tripoli in the 1860s, Sa'ada taught Arabic to the missionaries Henry Harris Jessup, Samuel Jessup, and Dr. George Post. He began teaching at a mission school for boys in Beirut in 1866, and he converted that same year. A few years later, he returned to his home region of Tripoli, in order to serve as a native preacher and also to work for the British vice consul. His son Najib studied theology, and he worked

as a preacher from 1888 until his premature death in 1893. A few years later, Elyas and his family moved to the United States, where he became the pastor of a Syrian Protestant congregation.

*References:* MH 63 (1867), in: ROS 5, 160; MH 64 (1868), in: ROS 5, 183; MH 66 (1870), in: ROS 5, 244–245; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 318–25, and vol. 2, 430.

#### 51. AL-SABUNJI, TANNUS AL-SHURI (OR ABU YUSUF) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Al-Sabunji distributed books and tracts for the mission, and he also visited and taught religion at native schools. He is listed as a corresponding member of the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences. In 1858, he was suspected of abusing two of his students and was expelled from the Beirut Church.

*References:* N.A. Keyes, “Native Helpers” (1844): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 1 (21); Anderson, “Memorandum of my visit to the Levant”: ABC 30.10. Vol. 3, 30, 40 (HHL); Van Dyck, “Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission,” 6; NECB minutes (May 14, 1858), 15–16.

#### 52. AL-SALIBI, SULAYMAN <sup>(P)</sup>

As a young man, Sulayman met the Englishman John Lowthian, who encouraged him to attend the seminary ‘Abeih. Sulayman, his brother Elyas, and Lowthian later established numerous elementary schools throughout Lebanon. The Syria Mission initially supported the “Salibi schools,” which were organized similarly to mission schools, although it later viewed them as competition. Sulayman’s association with the Americans ended after he turned down an offer to work as a preacher in Acre, continuing to teach at his school instead.

*References:* Abu Husayn, “The ‘Lebanon Schools,’” 205–19; Al-Aḥmar, “Madrasa ‘Abeih al-Injiliyya wa Atharha al-Thaqafi ‘ala Lubnan,” 66.

#### 53. SARKIS, IBRAHIM <sup>(N, P)</sup>

In 1852, Sarkis became a member of the Beirut Church. He composed mostly Arabic songs for the Protestant hymnal, and he was among the editors of the mission journal *al-Nashra al-Usubu‘iyya*.

*References:* NECB minutes (March 11, 1852), 7; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 76; Lindner, “Negotiating the Field,” 275; al-Helou, *Muzakirrat al-Mu‘allim Nassim al-Helou*, 147.

54. SARKIS, KHALIL (1842–1915) <sup>(P)</sup>

Khalil was the brother of Ibrahim Sarkis (no. 53). His family moved to Beirut when he was eight years old, and he attended the American mission school. He trained as a printer. He worked together with Salim al-Bustani for the *al-Matba'a al-Adabiyya*, and in 1877 he began to publish the newspaper *Lisan al-Hal* (literally: Mute Speech). He and his brother Ibrahim were recognized by the Ottoman government for developing the Istanbul typeface. He also led the Protestant Society for Benevolent Purposes (*al-Jam'iyya al-Khayriyya al-Injiliyya*) and made a name as an author. Sarkis married Bustani's daughter Louise.

*References:* Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 2, 741; al-Helou, *Muzakirrat al-Mu'allim Nassim al-Helou*, 145; Lindner, "Syrian Protestant Families."

55. AL-SHADUDI, AS'AD <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Born in 'Aleih in 1826, al-Shadudi attended the boys' seminary in Beirut. He joined the Beirut Church in 1849, and he later taught mathematics and physics at the 'Abeih seminary. He then served as director of a Druze boarding school, likewise in 'Abeih, before becoming a tutor at the SPC at the end of the 1860s. Bliss wrote that "Mr. Assaad Shadoody is faithful in his labours and has evinced more than ordinary talent for the mathematics. He has assisted very materially in compiling a Natural Philosophy in the Arabic Language. . ." Al-Shadudi was among the editors of the mission journal *al-Nashra al-Usubiyya*.

Influenced by a former Presbyterian missionary named Mr. Pinkerton, al-Shadudi began to espouse the Pietist fundamentalist view that all other Christian churches were corrupt and should no longer exist. The Syrian Protestant community distanced itself from Pinkerton and al-Shadudi, who lost his position at the SPC. He was expelled from the congregation in 'Abeih in 1868.

*References:* Van Dyck, "Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission," 12; SPC annual report (June 24, 1868): ABC 16.8.2., Vol. 2, 2; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 25; NECB minutes (November 21, 1849), 2 and (January 21, 1868), 21; Tibawi, "The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College," 276; Daniel Bliss to his wife Abby (Beirut, January 27, 1874), in: Bliss, *Letters from a New Campus*, 178, 243–44 (no. 49), 251 (no. 97); Al-Ahmar, "Madrasa 'Abeih al-Injiliyya wa Atharha al-Thaqafi 'ala Lubnan," 66; al-Helou, *Muzakirrat al-Mu'allim Nassim al-Helou*, 147.

56. SHAHWAN, ELYAS <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Van Dyck called him "bishop," referring to his former position. He worked in Sidon with Tannus al-Haddad (no. 31).

*References:* Van Dyck to Anderson (Sidon, September 30, 1852): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (327).

57. SHAKKUR, HANNA <sup>(P)</sup>

Shakkur and his son Sa'da Yazbek were accepted into the Beirut Church in 1855.

*References:* NECB (February 16, 1855), 12; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 25.

58. SHEMAYEL, MILHAM (confession unknown) <sup>(N)</sup>

Shemayel worked for Smith at the press, proofreading Arabic translations.

*References:* "Letter from Dr. Smith on the Printing Establishment" (Beirut, October 16, 1855): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5 (216).

59. SHIBLI, MILHAM (confession unknown) <sup>(N)</sup>

Shibli was hired as an Arabic teacher for the missionaries.

*References:* Anderson, "Memorandum of my visit to the Levant": ABC 30.10. Vol. 3, 31, 40 (HHL).

60. AL-SHIDYQAQ, AS'AD († 1830), (originally Maronite) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Because of his tragic story, al-Shidyaq was the Syria Mission's best-known convert. He came from a Maronite family that had copied books by hand for generations. He and his brothers attended the 'Ayn Warqa boarding school, and he later taught at a boys' school that was established in 1810. After getting to know the American missionary Jonas King, he became King's teacher in Syriac and translated numerous documents into Arabic that King needed for his work. Al-Shidyaq was fascinated by the Bible, which King and the missionary Bird had encouraged him to study. While translating King's farewell letter that sharply criticized the Catholic church, al-Shidyaq began to harbor serious doubts about the Catholic faith. After his conversion, the Maronite patriarch Yusuf Hubeysh threatened him with excommunication and eventually had him arrested. Under torture, he was compelled to repudiate his conversion. In 1830, al-Shidyaq died from the treacherous conditions in prison. He became a martyr and a powerful example for Protestants in Syria. Because the *Missionary Herald* reported extensively on his fate, he became well known for his role in the history of the Syria Mission in the United States as well.

*References:* MH 23 (1827), in: ROS 1, 437–48; MH 24 (1828), in: ROS 2, 26–33; Mishaqa, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage and Plunder*, 146.

61. AL-SHIDYAQ, FARIS (1805–1887), (Maronite, then Protestant, then Muslim) <sup>(N)</sup>

Faris studied in ‘Ayn Warqa with his brother As‘ad (no. 60). His brother’s death changed his life; afterward, he converted to the Protestant faith and assisted Smith with translations. At the end of the 1820s, the Americans sent him to Malta to help with the press. Because it did not yet have an Arabic typeface, he was hired by the Church Missionary Society. Between 1834 and 1848, he taught at the English mission school on Malta and edited numerous books for the press. Under Muhammad ‘Ali, he taught Arabic to American missionaries in Cairo, while also studying at Al-Azhar University. In 1857, he and the Englishman Samuel Lee translated the Bible into Arabic—a version that has remained largely unknown. After spending several years in England and France, he went to Tunisia and met the reformist politician Ahmad Bey. He eventually converted to Islam and settled in Istanbul, where he worked as an author.

*References:* Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 64; MH 24 (1828), in: ROS 2, 98; MH 25 (1829), in: ROS 2, 173, et al.

62. SARRUF, YA‘QUB (1852–1927) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Sarruf attended the American mission schools in Souq al-Gharb and ‘Abeih. He became one of the first sixteen students at the SPC, and he graduated in 1870. He taught Arabic to the American missionaries in Sidon, and for a short time he led the American girls’ school in Tripoli. He converted to the Protestant faith in 1873, and that same year he was hired as an instructor of natural philosophy, mathematics, and chemistry. In 1876, he and Faris Nimr founded the popular scientific journal *al-Muqtataf* (The Selected).

*References:* Glaß, *Der Muqtataf und seine Öffentlichkeit*, vol. 1, 181–92; Elshakry, “The Gospel of Science and American Evangelism,” 199 (note 100).

63. TABIT, KHALED ELYAZ <sup>(P)</sup>

Tabit, who came from Bhamdoun, was accepted into the Beirut Church in December 1851.

*References:* NECB minutes (December 24, 1851), 7; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 25; Lindner, “Syrian Protestant Families.”

64. TABIT, NA‘AMEH <sup>(P)</sup>

The cousin of Khaled Tabit (no. 63) became a member of the Beirut Church in 1851.

*References:* NECB minutes (March 4, 1851), 5; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 25; Lindner, "Syrian Protestant Families."

65. AL-WITWAT, 'ABDALLAH (originally Druze) <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Al-Witwat, a graduate of the American boys' seminary in Beirut, taught in a school for young children and was also a member of the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences.

*References:* Anderson, "Memorandum of my visit to the Levant": ABC 30.10. Vol. 3, 31, 40 (HHL); Van Dyck, "Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission," 12; Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 18.

66. WORTABET, GREGORY M. <sup>(P)</sup>

Gregory (Armenian: Krikur) was the brother of John Wortabet (no. 69), and he received a similar education. Like John, he was a member of Bustani's *Majma'at al-Tahdhib*, and also the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences, founded in 1847. In the 1850s, he worked in London's entertainment scene, to the American missionaries' great dismay. In 1852, he gave a series of lectures on Syria at the Brooklyn Female Academy in New York. In 1856, he published his two-volume work, *Syria and the Syrians; or, Turkey in the Dependencies*. According to Jurji Zaydan, Gregory studied medicine in London, specializing in quarantine. He became the head doctor at the quarantine station in Karbala, later moving to Jeddah, where he eventually died.

*References:* "Lectures on Syria," in: *The New York Times* (May 29, 1852); Zaydan, "al-Duktur Yuhanna Wurtabat," 425; Khuri, *A'mal al-Jam'iyya al-Suriyya li l-'Ulum wa l-Funun*, 18; Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 27, 147, and 192.

67. WORTABET, HANNI <sup>(N, P)</sup>

Hanni was the daughter of Jacob Gregory (no. 68) and Susan Wortabet (no. 71). She and her sister-in-law Salome Wortabet (no. 51) led a school in Hasbeiya. A letter from her to Eli Smith indicates that she also edited texts for him. She married the German missionary Henry Reichhardt.

*References:* Hanni Wortabet to Eli Smith (Hasbeiya, October 7, 1852): ABC 60 (98) (HHL); Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 1, 132, and 201.

68. WORTABET, JACOB GREGORY (1798–1833),  
(originally Armenian Orthodox)<sup>(N, P)</sup>

Wortabet attended a church school. He became secretary to the Armenian Orthodox bishop Gabriel in Jerusalem, and he was ordained as a priest (Armenian: *Vartabed*). Beginning in 1825, he worked for the missionary William Goodell, copying Turkish-Armenian tracts and arranging Turkish words for a dictionary, but he did not immediately convert. He eventually married, breaking his vows as a priest. After his own intensive study of the Bible, he converted to the Protestant faith. In 1833, the missionaries Bird and Whiting wrote about him: “It is not too much to say that there is not another individual in Syria, so well qualified in all respects for the work of preaching the gospel to the people of various languages and religions, and so ready on all occasions to improve his advantages for the glory of Christ and the good of souls.” Independent of the mission, he worked as a preacher in Sidon, where he died of cholera in 1832. He was survived by a daughter, Hanni (no. 67), and three sons: John/Yuhanna (no. 69), Gregory M./Krikur (no. 66), and Ya‘qub (or Henry, no. 72).

*References:* MH 24 (1828), in: ROS 2, 44–51; MH 29 (1833), in: ROS 2, 336–39 (quote); Bird, *Bible Works in Bible Lands*, 213–15; Zaydan, *Tarajim Mashahir al-Sharq fi l-Qarn at-Tasi‘ Ashar*, 425.

69. WORTABET, JOHN OR YUHANNA<sup>(N, P)</sup>

The son of the Armenian convert Jacob Gregory Wortabet (no. 68), John was born into the Protestant community. He attended the Beirut school for boys, which became a boarding school in 1835. In 1847, he joined the Beirut Church and also the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences. After the closing of the Beirut mission seminary, Cornelius Van Dyck and Henry De Forest taught him medicine and Latin; George Whiting and William Thomson instructed him in theology. He was ordained as a preacher in 1853. After marrying Salome Wortabet (no. 70), he was stationed as a native pastor in Hasbeiya. In 1860, he ended his work for the ABCFM, and he went to Aleppo as a missionary for the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. In 1866, he returned to Beirut and became a professor of medicine at the SPC.

*References:* Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 1, 377 and 383; Laurie, *Historical Sketch of the Syria Mission*, 26 and 27; Tibawi, “The Genesis and Early History of the Syrian Protestant College,” 264; Khuri, *A‘mal al-Jam‘iyya al-Suriyya li l-‘Ulum wa l-Funun*, 18; Lindner, “Negotiating the Field,” 1–2 (more in chapter III, section 2).

70. WORTABET, SALOME<sup>(N, P)</sup>

As the daughter of John Carabet (no. 21), a native Protestant who worked for the mission, she was educated in a mission school. She later worked as a teacher herself, and the American mission sent her to Mosul. She married John Wortabet

(no. 69) and moved to Hasbeiya, where she directed a school with John's sister Hanni (no. 67).

*References:* Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 1.

71. WORTABET, SUSAN OR SUSANNA OR SARDAS  
(originally Greek Catholic)<sup>(N, P)</sup>

Susan, the daughter of Nicola Laflufti (no. 39), married the convert Jacob Gregory Wortabet (no. 68) in 1825. The marriage produced four children. After Wortabet's death in 1832, Susan helped Sarah Smith, the wife of Eli Smith, in the girls' school that was founded in Beirut in 1834. She later married the Syrian Protestant deacon Elyas Fawaz (no. 22).

*References:* MH 31 (1835), in: ROS 2, 420; Hooker, *Memoir of Mrs. Sarah Lanman Smith*, 383; Wolcott to Anderson (Beirut, June 1, 1842): ABC 16.5., Vol. 3; Lindner, "Negotiating the Field," 25 and 274; Lindner, "Syrian Protestant Families."

72. WORTABET, YA'QUB<sup>(P)</sup>

Little is known about the second brother of John Wortabet (no. 69). Like his brothers, he was presumably educated by the Americans; Van Dyck mentioned a "Henry Wortabet" among the students of the boys' seminary in Beirut. Ya'qub later emigrated to the United States.

*References:* Van Dyck, "Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission," 12; Zaydan, *Tarajim Mashahir al-Sharq fi l-Qarn at-Tasi' Ashar*, 425.

73. YANNI, ANTONIUS<sup>(P)</sup>

Yanni was the son of a prosperous Greek Orthodox businessman from Tripoli, who as a young man had befriended the missionary Isaac Bird. In Tripoli in 1845, Antonius became a consular agent for the United States. The missionaries worried that his business dealings and many secular contacts might distract him from his newly acquired faith. He hosted many missionaries when they visited Tripoli. He maintained a friendly relationship with Eli Smith, and they corresponded regularly. Yanni was also a corresponding member of the Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences. He joined the mission church in 1855, leading his wife to divorce him and marry another man of the Greek Orthodox faith. In 1857, he turned down a position as consular agent for Russia, which would have required that he return to the Greek Orthodox church. He occasionally preached to a small circle of listeners in Tripoli. During the civil war of 1860, Yanni used his wealth and influence to assist those who had been injured or lost their homes. In an 1870 letter to the ABCFM, he complained that so few missionaries could hardly bring change to such a large

territory: “We beg most importunately that you will favor us at the very least with three additional missionaries, for the harvest is great, and the laborers are few.”

*References:* many letters from Yanni to Smith: ABC 50 (HHL); MH 45 (1849), in: ROS 4, 85–86; MH 51 (1855), in: ROS 4, 224–25; MH 53 (1857), in: ROS 4, 284; MH 55 (1859), in: ROS 4, 324; MH 57 (1861), in: ROS 5, 8; MH 66 (1870), in: ROS 5, 247–48 (quote); Wortabet, *Syria and the Syrians*, vol. 1, 115–16; Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board*, vol. 2, 334; Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 386–95.

#### 74. YA ‘QUB, ELYAS <sup>(N, P)</sup>

The convert from Rashaya al-Fukhar studied at the mission seminary in ‘Abeih, later working for the mission in the area around Ibl. Even before John Wortabet, he had been discussed as a candidate for pastoral office in Hasbeiya, but he was not the first choice. He and two other Protestants from Hasbeiya encouraged the founding of Protestant congregation there. He was frequently mentioned as a candidate for ordination, but this seems not to have transpired.

*References:* Van Dyck to Anderson (‘Abeih, October 21, 1850): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 5; Van Dyck to Anderson (Sidon, November 14, 1851): *ibid.* (325); Van Dyck to Anderson (Sidon, September 30, 1852): *ibid.* (327); Van Dyck to Anderson (Sidon, April 23, 1857): *ibid.* (343); Syria Mission to Anderson (Beirut, January 22, 1861): ABC 16.8.1., Vol. 6 (19); Jessup, *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, vol. 1, 25.

#### 75. AL-YAZIJI, NASIF (1800–1871), (Greek Catholic) <sup>(N)</sup>

Al-Yaziji was born in Kfarshima. He studied medicine with his father and a monk, and at a young age he read through numerous manuscripts in the monastery’s libraries. He first worked as a secretary for the Melkite patriarch Ignatius V. Qattan, and then as a private secretary for the princes Haydar al-Shihabi and Bashir Shihab II. At the court, he kept company with many poets. Even before 1840, he became Eli Smith’s unofficial secretary, an arrangement not made public because of his confession. The mission formally hired him as an Arabic tutor only after hostilities in the mountains brought a flood of Druze and Maronite refugees into Beirut. Eli Smith recruited al-Yaziji and Bustani to help with the Arabic Bible translation. He later taught Arabic at Bustani’s National School, at the Melkite Patriarchal College, and at the SPC. Despite his associations with the Syria Mission, he remained true to his own confession.

*References:* Van Dyck, “Reminiscences of the Syrian Mission,” 16; Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 45; Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 318–19; Hanssen, “The Birth of an Education Quarter,” 165–67; Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 63.

## ABSTRACT

From 1819 to 1870, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), a Protestant missionary society, directed the Syria Mission within the territory of present-day Lebanon. Its original aim of proselytizing among Jews and Muslims met with much resistance within the Ottoman Empire; the ABCFM therefore redirected its focus to reforming the Eastern churches from within. While achieving little success with evangelization, the American Syria Mission experienced more positive resonance within the sector of education. This analysis of the cultural transfer between Ottoman Syria and the United States of America focuses on four important protagonists. Previous studies have tended towards generalizing assertions that place the mission within the context of cultural imperialism. Drawing upon the examples of Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck, this study demonstrates the positive influences of dedicated missionaries on the cultural transformations of nineteenth-century Syria. The biographies and writings of two Syrian Protestants, Butrus al-Bustani and John Wortabet, provide insight into how these cultural influences were received by the Syrian population. Two central questions lie at the heart of this study: 1.) To what extent did the four protagonists become involved in a transcultural dialogue, and: 2.) How did these circumstances affect their work and their culturally conditioned self-perceptions? A close investigation of individual protagonists within the American-Syrian encounter of the nineteenth century demonstrates that, in their own way, all of the dialogue partners benefited from the lively exchange of cultural knowledge.

## INDEX

### A

- Abcarius, Yuhanna (John Abcarius), 156, 224n437, 264, 268
- ‘Abeih, 49n143, 51, 56–60, 61n239, 63, 64, 69, 77, 78, 81, 85, 88, 89, 128, 130, 131, 146n410, 170, 172, 173, 180, 183n131, 184n170, 192, 204, 205, 208, 250, 258, 270, 271, 272, 275, 277, 278, 281, 282, 284, 288
- ‘Abdallah, As‘ad, 269
- ‘Abduh, Muhammad, 160, 161n527
- Abdülhamid II, Sultan, 73n345, 89, 161, 190, 191n201
- ‘Abud, Daher, 211n342, 269
- Agha Abcarius, Ya‘qub, 268, 274
- Akhbar ‘an Intishar al-Injil fi Amakin Mukhtalifa* (→ *Al-Nashra al-Usubu ‘iyya*)
- Aleppo, 25, 28, 30, 31, 32, 51, 62, 103, 107, 130n287, 156n490, 199, 204, 204, 213, 214, 215, 216, 227, 233, 250, 276, 286
- ‘Ali, Muhammad, 71, 72, 74, 143, 284
- Al-Jam ‘iyya al-Sharqiyya*, 84n430, 85
- Al-Jam ‘iyya al-Suriyya li l-‘Ulum wa l-Funun* (→ Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences)
- Al-Jinan* (→ Bustani, Butrus al-)
- Al-Junayna* (→ Bustani, Salim al-)
- Al-Muqtataf*, 29n87, 67, 89, 150n450, 155, 156, 192, 284
- Al-Nashra al-Usubu ‘iyya*, 89, 93, 111, 114, 152–156, 198, 257, 258, 263, 272, 276, 281, 282
- American Arabic Type, 23, 102–105, 126
- American Bible Society, 41, 110, 139
- American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24n76, 26, 27, 27n82, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 37, 38, 40, 41, 43, 44, 48n134, 49, 49n143, 50, 53, 55, 56, 57, 58, 61, 62, 63, 68, 69, 70, 71, 75, 77, 78, 80, 85, 90, 91, 93n9, 94, 95, 97, 99, 100, 102, 104n89, 111, 115, 120n220, 122, 126, 127, 129, 130, 131, 135, 136, 137, 139n355, 150n450, 153, 158, 160, 163n2, 164n11, 165, 174, 177, 178, 208, 209, 210, 212, 213, 214n363, 216, 218, 223, 224, 226, 227, 230, 231, 249, 250, 286, 287
- American Home Missionary Society, 56
- American Mission Press, 21n53, 23, 27, 38–43, 77, 82, 84, 84n431, 88, 89, 90, 90n475, 97, 100, 103, 104, 105, 107, 110, 111, 119, 123, 127, 135, 137, 155, 156n490, 165, 177, 186, 194, 195, 231, 233, 253, 269, 277, 280, 283, 284
- American Oriental Society, 81, 108, 119, 120, 157n494
- American Tract Society, 40, 41, 255
- American University of Beirut (AUB), 11, 28, 63n255, 67, 128n282
- Anderson, Rufus, 18, 20, 26, 40, 41, 45, 47, 49n144, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 61, 64, 67n297, 68, 69, 70, 80, 96, 99n34, 101, 102, 105, 106, 109, 111, 115n183, 117, 120, 126, 129, 130, 132, 133, 134, 135, 138, 139, 159, 160, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 205, 206n313, 207, 208, 209, 211, 214, 232, 234, 250, 264
- Andover Theological Seminary, 97
- Anglo-American Cemetery, 99, 161n533, 199
- Anglo-American Congregation, 203, 219, 228n467, 233
- ‘Araman, Lulu, 270
- ‘Araman, Mikha‘il, 80n399, 173n67, 206, 270, 272, 274
- archaeology, Biblical, 115
- ‘Asfuriya, psychiatric clinic, 221, 277
- Asir (al-Azhari), Yusuf al-, 43, 79n391, 86n443, 89n472, 138, 139, 160, 182, 268
- ‘Ata, Musa, 271
- ‘Atiya, Ibrahim, 271
- Ayitani, Kamil al-, 269
- ‘Ayn Warqa, 35n34, 107, 169, 170, 172, 180, 273, 283, 284
- Azar, Allah, 269
- Azar, Yusuf, 269
- ### B
- Badger, George, 103, 104
- Badr, Hanna, 271
- Badr, Yusuf, 51n161, 54n186, 271
- Barakat, Shahin, 272
- Barbari, Rizq (or Razuq) Allah, 156, 254, 272
- Barudi, Iskandar al-, 161

- Beirut, 11, 23, 29, 31, 33, 34, 36n44, 37, 39, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 57, 58, 59, 62, 70, 71, 72, 74, 75, 76n368, 79, 81, 82, 85, 86, 87n462, 89, 90, 97, 99, 100, 104, 107, 120, 134, 135, 146, 149, 157, 158, 161, 169, 170, 171, 172, 178, 180, 182, 183, 185n143, 192, 199, 201, 202, 205, 206, 214, 215, 216, 218, 222, 227, 228, 233, 271, 272, 278, 282, 288
- Beirut Church, 50, 54n186, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 181n123, 186, 204n292, 218, 219n400, 233, 272, 274, 275, 276, 277, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 286
- Beshara (Sheikh), 272
- Bible, 18, 34, 35, 38, 41, 44, 45, 52, 58, 61, 77, 80, 93, 109, 111, 116n193, 118, 131, 138, 141, 153, 154, 256, 265, 269, 283, 286
- Bible translation, 20, 273; Arabic –, 37n47, 39n53, 42, 43, 79n391, 84, 86n443, 89n472, 97, 99, 105–110, 123, 128, 134, 135, 136, 138–142, 155, 160, 173, 174, 177, 182, 185, 256, 268, 273, 288
- Bibliotheca Sacra, 118
- Bilād al-Shām*, 30, 74
- Bliss, Daniel, 60–65, 67, 89n472, 137, 147–152, 159n511, 161n529, 178, 179, 183, 184n137, 197, 216–219, 222, 270
- Bliss, Howard, 67
- Boston, 13, 26, 40, 48, 53, 80, 85, 91, 97, 130, 157n494, 160
- Brigstocke, Richard, 149, 150
- British and Foreign Bible Society, 38, 41, 77, 141
- Brown, R. Grant, 213, 214, 227
- Buhari, Bussa al-, 272
- Bustani, Butrus al-, 17, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 42, 43, 48, 49, 51n160, 57, 58, 62, 78, 79n391, 80, 81, 84, 85, 88, 97n38, 105n96, 106, 107, 111, 119, 121n231, 123, 125, 130, 131, 132, 138, 141, 145, 155, 155n478, 164, 165n14, 166, 168n37, 169–199, 204, 206n315, 208, 210, 210, 214n363, 225n443, 226, 232, 249–253, 254, 257, 258, 268, 270, 271, 273, 275, 277, 282, 285, 288; *Da'irat al-Ma'arif*, 25n78, 105n97, 185, 190, 197n241, 198n251; *al-Jinan*, 89, 111, 145, 155, 156, 185, 186, 187, 188; *Muhit al-Muhit*, 123, 185, 186, 253; *Nafir Suriyya*, 29, 188, 189, 190, 195
- Bustani, Rahil 'Ata al-, 23, 98n40, 164, 166, 169n40, 170, 172n60, 208n328, 271
- Bustani, Salim al-, 85n438, 87n453, 174n79, 187, 198n251, 225, 253, 282; *al-Janna*, 89, 156, 185n146, 187, 232, 232n11; *al-Junayna*, 89, 185n146, 187
- C
- Cairo, 21n53, 41, 48, 86, 88n462, 102, 103, 115, 128n282, 145, 160, 182, 191n201, 258, 268, 284
- Calhoun, Simeon H., 53, 59, 63, 70, 78n381, 120, 131, 206
- Carabet, Dionysios (or John), 166, 170, 201, 207, 269, 273, 286
- Carabet, Melita, 166
- Carabet, Salome, 166, 207
- Central Turkey College ('Aintab), 64
- Chouf (mountains), 74
- Christianity, 15, 18, 20, 32, 33, 36, 69n313, 92, 109, 133, 153, 154, 164, 263, 277; Eastern –, 13, 19, 31, 32, 33, 33n17, 34, 35, 37, 42n87, 43n94, 45, 53n173, 71, 77, 78, 85, 86, 88, 101, 102, 107, 113, 117, 117n204, 133, 141, 162, 168, 214
- Christianization, 36n45, 56, 69n312 (see also → conversion)
- Church Missionary Society, 31n5, 38, 53n176, 102, 103n79, 119, 134n314, 254, 284
- civilizing, 13, 15, 21, 32, 36n45, 37, 45n109, 69n313, 71, 94, 188, 230, 277
- congregations, native –, 26, 37, 48, 49–55, 59, 74n348, 75, 93, 128, 131, 132, 133, 134, 162, 166, 174, 177, 179, 197, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 210, 212, 219, 230, 268, 269, 271, 272, 273, 276, 280, 281, 282, 288
- consul: American –, 36n44, 63, 74, 90, 128n282, 174, 232, 233, 273, 287; British –, 63, 74, 134n315, 214, 228n467, 268, 276, 279, 280
- contact zone, 15, 20, 27, 92, 95, 163
- converts, 22, 101, 168, 226; Protestant –, 19, 21, 33, 37, 47, 49, 51, 53, 54n182, 69, 71, 94, 95, 123, 131, 132, 163, 164, 165, 166, 168, 169, 172, 199, 200, 202, 203, 207, 211, 212, 223, 230, 231, 233, 258, 268–288
- conversion, 16, 17, 26, 27, 34, 34n24, 37, 40, 46, 49, 51, 52, 59, 66n285, 69, 70, 77, 123, 158, 163, 166, 171n52, 201, 269, 283 (see also → Christianization)
- correspondence, 17, 27, 28, 68, 95, 107n109, 115n183, 119, 122–125, 148n431, 165, 175, 183n132, 185, 208
- cultural broker, 16, 27, 92, 93, 95, 232
- cultural imperialism, 16, 22, 233

## D

- Damascus, 30, 32, 71, 72, 74, 85, 103,  
106n105, 107, 119, 121, 122, 123, 131,  
134n314, 161n527, 258, 270, 279
- Darwin, Charles, 58, 66, 147, 148, 149, 197
- De Forest, Henry, 47, 49n143, 70, 80, 81n410,  
99n41, 110, 120, 121n231, 128, 132, 136,  
166, 177n96, 203, 270, 286
- deacon, 166, 272, 273, 276, 287
- denationalization, 64, 167, 232
- Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*  
(→ *German Oriental Society*)
- dialogue, intercultural, 14n10, 15, 17, 18, 19,  
22, 25, 27, 35, 118, 231, 234
- dictionary, 123, 186, 195, 201, 224, 253, 264,  
267, 268, 273, 286
- disinterested benevolence, 32
- Dodge, David Stuart, 67, 148, 149, 183n132,  
216–218, 219, 222
- Dodge, Martha, 46, 203
- Druzes, 34, 37, 50n156, 59, 65, 71, 72, 73, 74,  
83n427, 85, 106, 132, 165n17, 180, 223,  
269, 280, 282, 285, 288
- Dwight, H.G.O., 68, 97, 100, 114

## E

- Eddy, William W., 66, 134, 136n330, 150, 151,  
156, 168n37, 210, 211, 263, 265
- Edinburgh, 28, 128n281, 209, 211, 213, 214,  
215, 220, 266
- Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, 209
- Egypt, 25, 39n62, 41, 42n91, 43, 48, 62, 67,  
71, 85, 86, 88, 89, 97, 107, 108, 138, 141,  
143, 145, 158, 160, 161, 183n127, 189,  
190, 195, 201n270, 225n440, 262, 268,  
274, 279
- Egyptian rule over Syria, 18, 21, 34n24,  
35n34, 48, 72, 73, 74
- excommunication, 33, 52n171, 169, 278

## F

- Fawaz, Elyas, 51n160, 80n399, 81n410,  
122n238, 123, 164, 166, 173, 204n294,  
206, 273, 274, 275, 276, 287
- female seminary (Beirut), 47n124, 137n337  
(see also → women's education)
- Filbis, Dimitrius, 274
- Fisk, Pliny, 29n89, 32, 47n131, 95n26, 97n34,  
224n437
- Fleischer, Heinrich Leberecht, 104, 121,  
139n360, 157n495
- Free Church of Scotland, 74, 209n333, 213

## G

- German Oriental Society, 79, 81, 116, 120,  
157n495
- girls' school, 21, 33, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48,  
49n143+144, 70n322, 75, 77n368, 79, 97,  
113, 127, 130, 136, 137, 193, 194, 199,  
203, 207n325, 208, 270, 271, 274, 278,  
284, 287 (see also → women's education)
- Goodell, William, 29n89, 33, 35, 36n39, 44,  
45, 46, 51, 68, 95, 102, 117n205, 120, 126,  
201, 202, 224n435+436, 268, 273, 276,  
286
- Gregory, Rufka, 49n143, 166, 208, 274
- Gregory, Sada, 166, 208, 274
- Gregory, Ya'qub, 207, 274

## H

- Haddad, Beshara al-, 275
- Haddad, Tannus al-, 44, 79n396, 81n410, 100,  
164, 201n270, 205, 273, 275, 282
- Hadiqat al-Akhbar*, 42, 88, 89, 111n143, 114,  
277
- Hakim, Yusuf al-, 276
- Hashim, Beshara, 276
- Hatt-i Hümayün* (law), 73, 86, 88
- Hatt-i Sherif* (law), 73
- Haurani, Ibrahim al-, 156n490, 257, 263, 276
- hybridity, 168, 169

## I

- Islam, 14, 34, 79, 87n454, 117n204, 140, 188,  
191n192, 194, 223, 284
- Istanbul, 21n53, 30, 50, 64, 72, 76, 85, 87, 88,  
90, 93, 103, 114n181, 150, 215, 258, 268,  
282, 284

## J

- Jabur, Shim'un, 274
- Jam'iyat al-Maqasid al-Khayriyya al-Islamiyya* (Islamic Society for Benevolent Purposes), 79, 268
- Jam'iyat al-'Ilmiyya al-Suriyya* (Syrian Scientific Society), 85, 86n443, 87,  
192n202, 194, 225n443
- Jam'iyat Zahrat al-Adab* (Flower of Arts Society), 183, 192n202
- Jared, Yusuf, 275
- Jerawan, Saliba, 55, 275
- Jerusalem, 32, 33, 36n44, 57, 103, 107, 114,  
124, 167, 177n95, 198, 201, 208, 217, 252,  
270, 277, 286
- Jessup, Henry Harris, 34, 48, 52, 62, 63, 66,  
68, n310, 75, 94, 105, 120, 122, 124, 131,

- 151n455, 152, 156, 160, 162, 164, 171, 178, 179, 180, 184, 185, 190, 191, 197, 215, 218, 219, 222n420, 233, 263, 269, 272, 279, 280; *Fifty-Three Years in Syria*, 152, 179; *The Women of the Arabs*, 164, 184, 192n211
- Jessup, Samuel, 156, 263, 280
- Jews, 31, 32, 33, 34n27, 49, 65, 75, 199, 201, 213, 214, 215, 225n440, 227
- Jimmal, Jirjius, 275
- K
- Kaiserswerth deaconesses, 54n184, 76n367, 146, 161, 178n101, 207n325, 220, 222, 227, 228
- Karem, Tannus al-, 269, 277
- Kayat (Khayat), As'ad Ya'qub al-, 29, 276
- Kheir Allah, As'ad, 233n16, 277
- Khuri, Khalil Sabur al-, 88, 89, 105n95+96, 111n143, 114, 186n155, 277
- King, Jonas, 36n39, 52n167, 68, 230, 283
- knowledge, 16, 18, 20, 26, 35n33, 65, 66, 71, 79, 81, 82, 83, 87n453, 89, 93, 102, 111, 112, 113, 157, 158, 160, 168, 183, 187, 188, 189, 190n188, 192, 193, 194, 195, 225, 227, 232, 234
- knowledge transfer, 19, 105, 234
- L
- Lafufti, Joseph, 278
- Lafufti, Nicola, 277
- Latuf, Na'ami, 278
- Lebanon, 13, 24, 28, 30, 32, 33n17, 39n64, 42n89, 71, 86n441, 141, 156, 230, 279, 281
- Lewis, Edwin, 66, 146, 147, 148n427, 149, 150, 151, 219; controversy surrounding –, 66, 147, 148n426, 197n247, 221
- Lebanon schools, 76, 77, 78, 180, 209
- London Missionary Society, 38, 68n306, 168n34
- London Religious Tract Society, 41, 65, 263, 264
- London Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 106
- Lowthian, John, 77, 78, 281
- M
- Ma'aluf, As'ad al-, 278
- Madrasa Wataniyya* (National School), 49, 85, 138, 178, 179–185, 188, 251, 268, 273, 288
- Maghbughub, Khalil, 279
- Majdalani, Kosta, 278
- Majma'at al-Tahdhib* (Society for Education), 81, 87, 192, 192n202, 285
- Majmu' Fawa'id* (Collected Useful Lessons), 89, 93, 110–114, 152, 153, 156, 187n162, 255
- Makarius, Shahin, 76n368, 80, 84, 86n441, 91
- Maronites, 35n34+35, 50n156, 59, 71, 72, 77n368, 90, 106n105, 107, 141, 159n511, 164, 169, 170, 172, 173, 181n121, 191n197, 198, 208, 223, 250, 252, 268, 273, 278, 283, 288
- Martyn, Henry, 43n94, 97n35, 99, 105
- Matba'at al-Amrikan* (→ American Mission Press)
- medicine, 48, 62, 64, 75n353, 92, 104, 111, 127, 128, 129, 130, 142, 143, 146, 151, 199, 203, 208, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 220, 220n408, 221, 222, 223, 225, 226, 227, 261, 279, 285, 286, 288
- mentor, 99, 124, 125, 164, 168, 172, 185, 204, 205, 208, 225n444, 227, 231
- Metawileh* (→ Shi'a Muslims)
- Mikha'il, Nasif, 279
- millet*, 36, 73
- Mishaqa, Mikha'il, 85n438, 119, 121n231, 122, 123, 124, 125, 225n443, 258, 279
- Mission Church, 49n145, 50, 50n155, 51, 133, 201, 203, 219, 220, 278, 287 (see also → Anglo-American Congregation)
- mission: – doctor, 129, 131, 133, 135, 145, 158, 159, 250; – assistant (female), 13, 33, 70, 111, 203; – family, 49n143, 95, 134, 135, 165n17, 166, 177, 203, 207, 208n327, 270, 273, 274, 278; – school, 21, 26, 33, 35n35, 36n41, 37, 38n51, 40, 43–49, 56, 57, 58, 61, 64, 67, 67n297, 68, 69, 71, 74, 75, 83, 86, 88, 90, 97, 102, 113, 137, 163, 164, 167, 169, 172, 188, 193, 194, 199, 203, 207n325, 208, 251, 270, 271, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 280, 282, 284, 286, 287; – house, 36n42, 80, 163n2, 203n283; – periodicals (→ *al-Nashra al-Usubu'iyya*, *Majmu' Fawa'id*); – press (→ American Mission Press)
- mission seminary: – in 'Abeih, 49n143, 56–60, 61n239, 63, 69, 77, 78, 81n406, 85, 89, 128, 130, 131, 170, 173, 183n131, 184n137, 204, 258, 270, 272, 275, 277, 281, 282, 288; – in 'Aintab, 64; – in Beirut, 47, 57, 274, 282, 285, 286, 287; – in Istanbul, 64
- mission station, 13, 31n5, 32, 33, 41, 68, 92, 149, 172, 178n104, 180, 214, 275

*Missionary Herald*, 13, 17, 20, 33, 35n35, 44, 48, 52n169, 55, 68, 71, 78, 117, 118, 126, 130, 137, 153, 164, 178, 202n278, 208, 214n363, 272, 283  
 missionary wife, 14n9, 33n17, 46, 47, 69, 95n28, 97, 98n41, 99n44, 100, 138, 168n37, 203n283, 208, 271, 287  
 Mount Lebanon, 22, 42n87, 48, 71, 72, 74, 84, 118, 120n223, 180, 223, 252, 278  
*mutassarifiyya*, 72, 73, 75, 86

## N

*nahḍa*, 24, 25, 26, 86–90, 91, 159, 170, 195, 232, 279  
 National Evangelical Church of Beirut, 49  
 National School (→ *Madrassa Wataniyya*)  
 native, 14, 15, 17, 19, 22, 33, 34, 36n39, 37, 42, 43, 44, 48, 49, 50, 57, 58, 62, 63, 64, 66, 69, 76, 77, 79, 82, 91, 92, 95, 105, 107, 108, 111, 118, 123, 131, 136, 137, 139, 150, 151, 158, 163, 164, 166n24, 167n31, 168, 186n149, 187, 193, 196, 203, 209, 215, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222, 224, 226, 231, 232, 234, 265; – agency, 53, 54n180, 213, 214n363, 223; – assistant, 27, 164; – church, 52, 53, 56, 68, 170, 173, 174, 175, 177, 179, 197, 204, 206, 210, 211, 212, 219, 231, 233; – helper, 25, 27, 29, 82, 122, 132, 163n7, 164, 165, 170, 189, 196, 201, 202, 211, 214, 233, 268–289; – ministry, 55n192, 133, 176, 213; – pastor, 53, 54, 55, 56n197, 61, 69, 125, 126, 132, 176, 177n94, 205, 206, 207, 211, 271, 272, 286 (see also → pastoral office); – preacher, 21, 44n100, 54, 55, 93, 163n6, 209  
 Native Missionary Society, 178, 214n363  
 Naufal, Effendi, 280  
 Naufal, Salim, 114, 280  
 Nimr, Faris, 29, 66, 67, 85n436, 86n441, 89, 145, 150n450, 155, 157n499, 158, 161, 225n443, 258, 284  
*Nusairiyeh* (Alawites), 223

## O

Orient, 14, 20n51, 21, 25  
 Oriental studies, 17, 116, 127  
 Orientalist, 42n91, 79, 84, 104, 107, 107n112, 122, 127, 140n366  
 Ottoman Empire, 18, 25, 26, 30, 36, 65n283, 72, 76, 86, 86n441, 87n449+454, 88n459, 89, 90, 118n213, 196, 209n333, 231

## P

Palestine, 13, 25, 31n5, 32, 42, 62, 71, 97, 104, 114, 115, 126, 131, 141, 230n2  
*Panoplist*, 68 (see also → *Missionary Herald*)  
 Parsons, Levi, 32, 33, 47n131, 95n26, 97n34  
 pastoral office, 172, 174n75, 175, 186, 206, 211n342, 270, 288  
 (see also → native pastor)  
 Paxton, John D., 101–102, 118  
 periodicals, Arabic –, 23, 28, 88n462, 89, 93n10, 105, 110n142, 144n394, 195 (see also → *al-Nashra al-Usubu 'iyya*; → *Majmu' Fawa'id*; → Bustani, Butrus al-; → Bustani, Salim al-)  
 piety, 49, 52, 53, 117, 126, 131, 132, 133, 149, 167, 169n40, 212, 226, 227, 228, 231  
 Post, George, 66, 78n384, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150, 216, 218, 219, 220, 221, 280  
 postmillennialism, 32  
 Presbyterian Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (PBCFM), 13, 37, 49n143, 67, 68n305+310, 93n9+10, 140n366, 151, 158, 271  
 press, printing, 21n53, 34n27, 38n53, 41, 42, 43n96, 84n431, 91, 103, 188, 195  
 (see also → American Mission Press)  
 printing, Arabic, 23, 34, 37, 39, 68, 102–105, 194 (see also → typeface, Arabic)  
 proselytism, 36n39, 49, 184  
 Protestants, 15n11, 31n4, 34, 36, 49n144, 62, 73, 118n213, 122, 133, 159n511, 222; Syrian –, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 33n17, 50, 52, 56, 66, 71, 95, 122n238, 123, 132, 134n314, 156, 163n3, 164, 165, 167, 168, 169, 172, 173n64, 176, 181, 208n328, 211, 212, 214n363, 224n433, 232, 233, 268–288  
 Prudential Committee (of the ABCFM), 40n72, 62, 69n313, 80n400, 130, 134

## Q

*qā'immaqāmiya*, 72  
 Qasim, Muhammad, 123, 280

## R

*Republican Mother*, 46, 193  
 Rida, Muhammad Rashid, 160  
 Robert College (Istanbul), 64  
 Robinson, Edward, 97, 99n42, 104, 114–117, 121  
 Rödiger, Emil, 84, 104, 105n99, 121, 122, 140n360  
 Royal Geographic Society, 116

- S
- Sa'ada, Elyas, 275, 280
- Sabunji, Tannus al-Shuri al-, 281
- Salibi, Elyas al-, 77, 78, 281  
(see also → Lebanon schools)
- Salibi, Sulayman al-, 77, 78, 123, 281  
(see also → Lebanon schools)
- Sarkis, Khalil, 42, 105n96, 258, 282
- Sarkis, Ibrahim, 156, 281, 282
- Sarruf, Ya'qub, 29, 66, 67, 85n436, 86n441, 89, 145, 148n432, 150n450, 152n464, 155, 157n499, 158, 161, 185n147, 196n236, 197n244, 198, 203, 220, 225n443, 228, 229, 258, 262, 284
- schoolbooks, Arabic (→ textbooks, Arabic)
- scientific societies, 79–86, 87, 91, 157–158, 192, 192n202 (see also → *Jam'iyat al-Maḡasid al-Khayriyya al-Islamiyya*; → *Jam'iyat al-'Ilmiyya al-Suriyya*; → *Jam'iyat Zahrat al-Adab*; → *Majma'at al-Tahdhib*)
- Shadudi, As'ad al-, 63, 156, 282
- Shahwan, Elyas, 282
- Shakkur, Hanna, 283
- Shemayel, Milham, 111n148, 283
- Shi'a Muslims, 59, 65
- Shibli, Milham, 283
- Shidyaq, As'ad al-, 164, 170, 230n2, 252, 283, 284
- Shidyaq, Faris al-, 141, 284
- Smith, Eli, 14n9, 17, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 34, 35, 36n40, 39, 40, 42, 42n88, 43, 45n109, 47, 48n133, 52, 53n173, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72n332, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 89, 91, 93, 95, 96, 97–127, 128, 133, 134n318, 138, 139, 140, 141, 152, 153, 156, 157n495, 166, 167n30, 168n31, 169, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 185, 186, 194, 197, 201, 203, 204, 205, 206, 209, 210n338, 215n380, 227, 231, 232, 233, 249, 250, 251, 252, 254–255, 256, 264, 271, 273, 275, 279, 283, 284, 285, 287; *Biblical Researches in Palestine, and in the Adjacent Regions*, 97, 114–117
- Smith, Hetty (*née* Mehitabel Simpkins Butler), 98, 99n44, 172n60
- Smith, Sarah Lanman, 14n9, 46, 69, 98n40, 100, 170n47, 271, 287
- Smyrna, 39, 41, 103, 104, 250
- Sublime Porte, 30n95, 34, 72n335
- Sunni Muslims, 59, 65, 72, 86n443, 223
- Syria Mission, 13, 14n6, 15, 18n36, 20, 22, 25, 26, 33, 37, 38, 42, 44, 48, 61, 62, 66, 68, 70, 74, 75, 77, 80, 91, 97, 117, 127, 137, 152, 153, 156, 158, 165, 178, 180, 187, 189, 195, 199, 200, 202, 205, 206, 209, 210, 213, 229, 232, 233n17, 234, 281, 283
- Syrian Protestant College (SPC), 24n76, 28, 28n84, 29n85+87, 41, 48n141, 59, 60, 61–67, 75, 78, 83, 89, 128, 128n282, 136, 137, 145, 146, 148n427, 149, 150, 151, 152, 156n490, 157n499, 159, 162, 178, 179, 180, 183, 184, 187n164, 197, 199, 203, 215, 216, 217–219, 221, 222, 224, 226, 227, 229, 260, 261, 262, 265, 266, 267, 268, 270, 276, 277, 282, 284, 286, 288; Board of Managers, 63, 148, 183, 184, 216n383, 218, 221, 260; Board of Trustees, 63, 62, 63n259, 66, 146n411, 147, 148, 149, 183n132, 216, 217, 218, 222; medical department, 63, 137, 145, 146, 148n427, 150, 217; preparatory department, 60, 183, 184; language of instruction, 64, 67, 137, 150, 221
- Syrian Society for Arts and Sciences, 79–85, 112, 119, 121, 157, 158, 186, 192, 194, 225n442, 251, 270, 273, 276, 279, 280, 281, 285, 286, 287
- Syro-Egyptian Society, 81, 120
- T
- Tabit, Khaled Elyaz, 284
- Tabit, Na'ameh, 284
- tamaddun* (civilization), 88, 188n172, 193
- Tanzimat* – reforms, 73, 76 (see also → *Hatt-ı Hümayün*; → *Hatt-ı Sherif*)
- Tauchnitz, Karl, 103n75, 104, 105n99, 121
- Temple, Daniel, 100
- textbooks, Arabic –, 24, 28, 40, 41, 48, 77, 91, 120n220, 128, 131, 135, 144, 145, 160, 170, 218, 226, 250–251, 254–255, 258–263, 265–267, 271
- Thamarat al-Funun*, 79n394, 86n443, 183n127, 268
- Tholuck, August, 104
- Thomson, Eliza, 46, 95n26
- Thomson, William M., 32n14, 48n139, 51, 54n186, 57, 61, 63, 79, 80, 83, 84, 91, 120, 128, 130n296, 132, 133, 152n468, 160n526, 172, 179, 183, 203, 204, 205, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 212, 216, 217, 224, 267, 275, 286
- transculturation, 17–19, 125
- Three Self program, 53, 55, 57

- typeface, Arabic –, 23, 38n52+53, 41, 42n89, 88, 100, 102, 103, 104, 106, 284  
(see also → American Arabic Type)
- U
- Union Theological Seminary (New York), 136, 144
- United Presbyterian Church of Scotland (UPC), 28, 31n5, 199, 209, 213, 214, 215, 217, 219n402, 227, 286
- Urmia, 68, 93n9, 111n151
- V
- Van Dyck, Cornelius Van Alen, 17, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 39n59, 41, 43, 52, 55, 57, 58, 59, 61, 63, 65, 66, 70, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 86n443, 89, 90, 91, 92n6, 93, 96, 99, 107, 109, 110, 120, 122, 127–162, 164n11, 165n17, 166, 168n31, 169, 170, 172, 174, 177, 182, 187n164, 194, 197, 198, 202n278, 203, 205, 206, 208, 209, 211, 212, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 221n413, 222, 224n437, 225n443, 228, 231, 232, 233, 250, 255–264, 268, 269, 282, 286, 287
- Van Dyck, Julia (*née* Abbott), 128, 134n315, 138, 168n37
- Van Dyck, William, 66, 128n282, 148, 149, 158, 222, 225n443
- W
- Waldmeier, Theophilus, 221
- waṭan* (fatherland), 87, 88n459, 185, 186, 188, 196, 198, 232
- Whiting, George B., 44, 49n143, 51, 104, 110, 130n296, 132, 166, 167, 168n37, 203, 206, 207, 208, 273, 274, 277, 279, 286
- Whiting, Matilda S., 166, 167, 208
- Witwat, ‘Abdallah al-, 80n399, 285
- Wolcott, Samuel, 70n319, 80, 132n305, 203, 280
- women’s education, 46, 47, 113, 192–195
- Wortabet, Gregory M., 29, 81n410, 122n238, 167, 203, 208, 227, 285, 286
- Wortabet, Hanni, 166, 167, 202, 207, 208, 285, 286, 287
- Wortabet, Jacob Gregory, 122n238, 166, 199, 200–202, 206, 273, 277, 285, 286, 287
- Wortabet, John (or Yuhanna), 17, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29n86, 30, 33n17, 41, 46, 54, 55, 62, 63, 66, 80n399, 81n410, 85n438, 94, 95, 123, 124, 125, 128, 132, 133, 134, 137, 138n348, 142n384, 145, 150, 152, 158, 161, 164, 166, 167, 168, 169, 175, 176, 184n132, 194, 199–229, 232, 233, 233n14, 264–267, 275, 277, 285, 286, 287, 288; *Researches into the Religions of Syria*, 222–224, 227
- Wortabet, Salome (*née* Carabet), 166, 199, 207, 208, 213, 216, 285, 286
- Wortabet, Susan (Sardas), 23, 30, 166, 167, 168n36, 199, 201, 202, 273, 277, 285, 287
- Wortabet, Ya‘qub, 203, 286, 287
- Y
- Yanni, Antonius, 123, 125, 233n14, 287
- Ya‘qub, Elyas, 288
- Yaziji, Ibrahim al-, 86n441, 87, 141, 158, 187n164, 225n443
- Yaziji, Nasif al-, 39, 43, 79n396, 80, 80n399, 81n410, 87, 106, 108, 121, 123, 125, 127, 138, 141, 182, 187n164, 204, 249, 251, 268, 288
- Young, Cuthbert G., 78n381, 209
- Z
- Zaydan, Jurji, 29, 87, 91, 139n355, 142, 147n424, 148n426, 150, 158, 159n513, 285
- Zoqaq al-Blat (Beirut), 99, 180

The work of Christian missions in past centuries has persistently been viewed in a negative light, although missionaries did not always act with cultural imperialist or colonialist intent. This volume presents a more nuanced interpretation of mission work, illuminating the significance of interpersonal interactions within the mission field. The Syria Mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), which was active in the Ottoman Province of Syria (present-day Lebanon) between 1819 and 1870, provides the study's central focus. The study analyzes cultural exchange between the Ottoman Empire

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